BEAT.DE SKILLS & SOFTWARE FOR PRODUCERS

Beat

229 | 02-2025

12 GB SOFTWARE DOWNLOAD

FULL VERSION:
DHPLUGINS HALO-2 LITE*
BRUTAL BASS UNIT FOR FREE

- 2 SOUND INSTRUMENTS FROM AAS
  FREE CHOICE FROM 76 PACKS
- SYNTH CLASSICS II
  79 MEATY BASSES, AIRY LEADS & INSPIRING CHORDS

*Only while stocks last.

TO THE MAX:
6 GB Loops & Scoring Sounds
for Soundtracks, D&B and Techno

PODCAST WITH PURPLE DISCO MACHINE

FROM HARD TO HYPNOTIC

TECHNO MASTERCLASS

BRUTALISMUS, LANDRY & I HATE MODELS
GET TRACKS DONE IN NO TIME

TEST: ELEKTRON DIGITONE II

THE BEST FM HARDWARE SYNTH?

HANDS-ON: VOCALS WITH AI

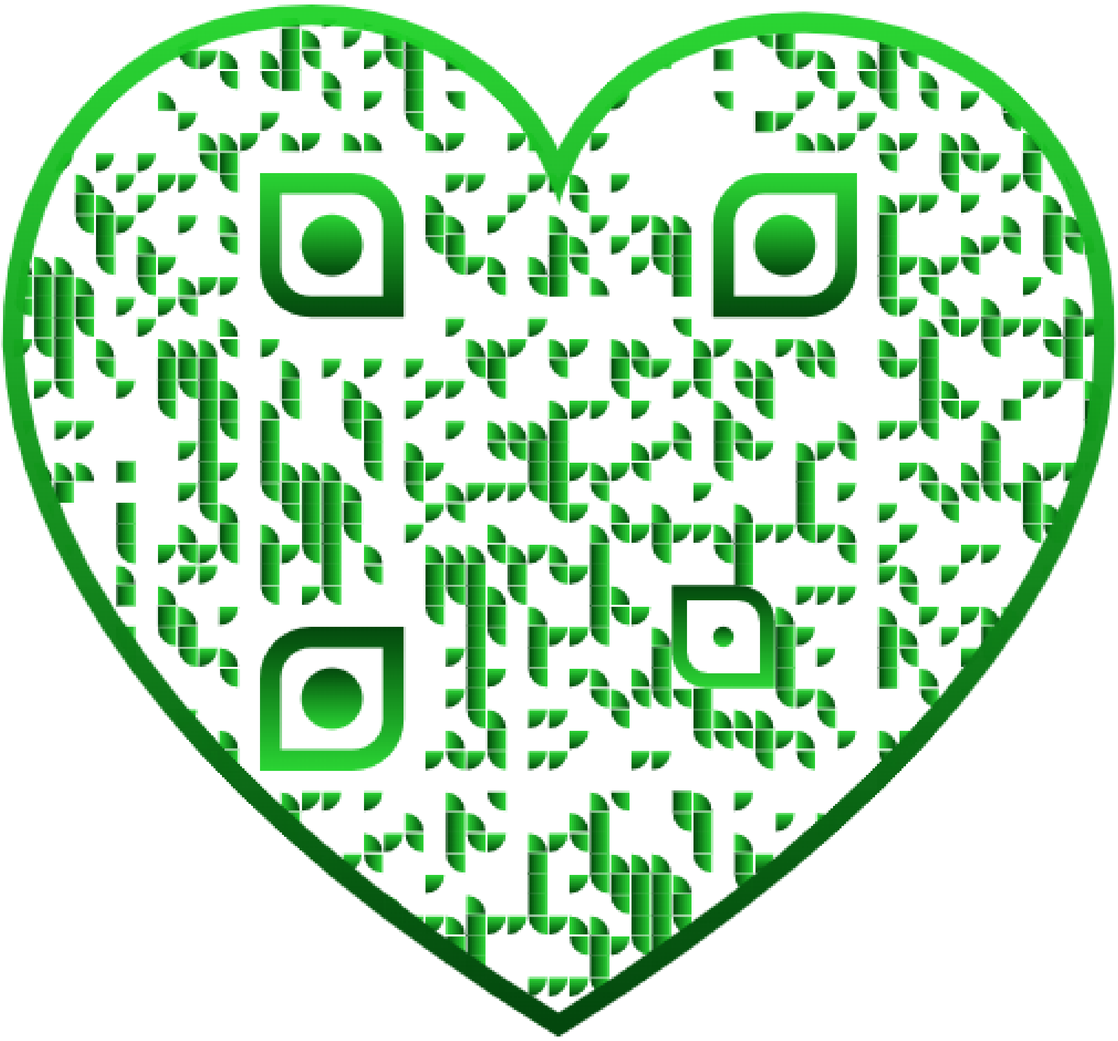
CREATE VOX THAT NO ONE ELSE HAS

SYNCUSSION SY-1 CULT DRUMS UNDER 200€

DECONSTRUCTED BASSLINES À LA ANFISA LETYAGO

D 6,99€ AT 7,90€ CH 12,90CHF LUX 8,20€

TESTS ARTURIA KEYLAB MK3 | BLACK LION AUDIO REVOLUTION EXP | FREQPORT FREQTUBE FT1



FOCAL
FOCAL
Lensys Professional

LENSYS PROFESSIONAL I CLOSED-BACK HEADPHONES

HANDCRAFTED
IN FRANCE

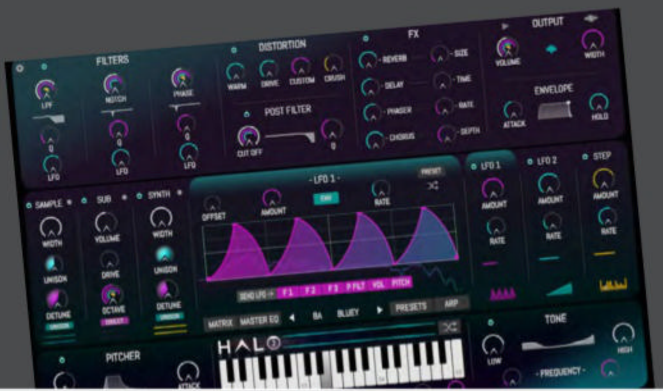
Headphones you won't want to leave behind. The Lensys Professional is a closed-back headphone that is the perfect addition to your audio engineering toolkit, whether in the studio or on the road.
The patented drivers create precise sound and a remarkable stereo image. And thanks to their flexible, smoothly curved headband, you'll forget you're even wearing headphones.

Accuracy. Anywhere.

Exclusive distribution: Sound Service European Music Distribution I www.sound-service.eu

GET STARTED

SOFTWARE HIGHLIGHTS



Monster synth for Drum&Bass

DHPlugins HALO-2 Lite

Many sound designers have cut their teeth on the brutal bass and lead sounds of Drum & Bass, Future Bass and Dubstep. With our software highlight, DHPlugins HALO-2 Lite, they become child's play. This monster synth combines powerful synthesis with flexible samples and shines with massive Basses, screeching Leads and classic Reese sounds - perfect for bass-heavy genres!

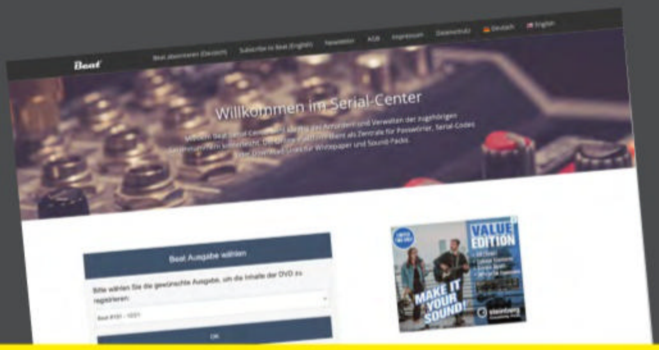
Download: see page 9 | Info: dhplugins.com win | mac

Free choice from 76 packs

2 Sound instruments by AAS

One software highlight, twice the fun: this month, our friends at Applied Acoustic Systems are giving you two great sound instruments. Whether you're into vintage synth sounds, cutting-edge club sounds or experimental soundscapes, you can choose your two favorites from a total of 76 packs. Whatever genre or style you prefer, you are guaranteed to find the right inspiration for your musical projects here.

Download: see page 9 | Info: applied-acoustics.com win | mac



All serial numbers safely accessible:

The Beat Serial Center

To ensure that none of your serial numbers are lost in the future (for instance, in the event of a new installation, Outlook crash or disk crash), you can now conveniently manage them online. The advantages are obvious: The editorial team can send you targeted software updates, you have access to all serials at any time and from anywhere, and everything is managed and stored in a central location. The Serial Center thus becomes your personal password archive on the web.
www.serialcenter.de

79 meaty basses, airy leads & inspiring chords

Synth Classics II (Zampler & MPCs)

Synth Classics II takes you on a journey to the golden era of hardware gear: 79 presets shine with the remarkable flair of legends like Sequential Circuit Prophet, Odyssey, ARP2600, Oberheim SEM and Novation's all time classic Bass Station – accompanied by bonus patches from Peak and the compact Prophet clone Toraiz AS-1. Ready to transform your tracks? Dive in and experience the magic!

Download: see page 9 | More packs: zamplersounds.com win | mac

Beat #229 – Exclusive software
More than 12 GB of valuable plug-ins and samples to download

the LOUDEST
DEEP & RAW TECHNO
DREAD RECORDINGS 01 DRUM & BASS VOLUME ONE TITAN
AS132
MORTEM DEEP&TWISTED DRUM&BASS
PUNCTURE KIT PRESENTS BEATSCYCLING

6 GB

6 GB loops & scoring sounds for Soundtracks, D&B und Techno

Our full synth version HALO-2 is just the thing for anyone looking for fat bass and gripping lead sounds. Perfectly tuned to genres such as Drum & Bass, Future Bass and Dubstep, it will bring your tracks to life. As a second highlight, we have two instruments of your choice from AAS. Here you can freely choose your favorites from a total of 76 packs!

We have carved our Expansion Pack Synth Classics II from exquisite synth legends such as the Prophet, Odyssey, ARP2600 or Oberheim SEM. Here you'll find 79 presets with powerful basses, airy leads and inspiring chords for your Zampler and Akai MPCs.

This month's 6 GB sample package is a big rattle in the box. Fans of cultivated drum & bass will get their money's worth with their rolling drum loops, as will techno lovers who celebrate the UMEK sound. In addition, 1.6 GB are reserved for scoring sounds with which you can conjure up your next movie trailer from enchanting piano melodies.

Contents compiled by the Beat editorial team

Ami Sampler
Options
Ami Sampler 1.3
01.sawlead
02.Choir Aahs
03.Flute
04.Backingstr
ASTRIID

8 BIT SAMPLER IN AMIGA STYLE

astriid Ami Sampler

Experience the vintage vibe of the Amiga sound with the Ami Sampler from Astriid. It's not just the retro look that contributes to this, but rather the characterful 8-bit sound. Up to 12 sounds with individually adjustable volume can be imported. By reducing the sample rate, the sound sounds even more authentic.

Download: see page 9 | **Info: github.com/astriiddev** win | mac | linux

ZYKLØP
UNDO
REDO
THE ZYKLOP
BY DAWESOME
BROWSE
SAVE
INIT
DAWESOME
SETUP OSMOSE
MASTER 440
GLIDE 12
PB 2
CPU ECO
125 PRESETS SELECTED
RENATE
RESO EYES
RESONANCE GARDEN
RUSTY FLOWERS I
SALT FEARY
SAUSAGE PRESSURE
SAVITY SEA
SINGING BOWL
SKY GUARDIANS
SOFT BELLS
SPACE OF HERE
SPACE SYNTH
SPACETAB
MAIN ADSR

FRESH SOUNDS THANKS TO RESYNTHESIS

Dawesome ZYKLOP

The ZYKLOP synthesizer from Dawesome is based on resynthesis. The core is the iris, onto which any samples or loops can be dragged in order to break down all sound elements into individual grains (granules), rearrange them and add effects. Some presets are included.

Download: see page 9 | **Info: dawesomemusic.com** win | mac

Exclusive download:
The Beat Studio

2 GB

Synth Classics II for Zampler & Akai MPCs

Apsonic Speedrum BE

Powerful drum sampler with 16 MPC-style pads

Acon Dynamics BE

All-rounder with Compressor, Expander and Gate

Thorn Solo

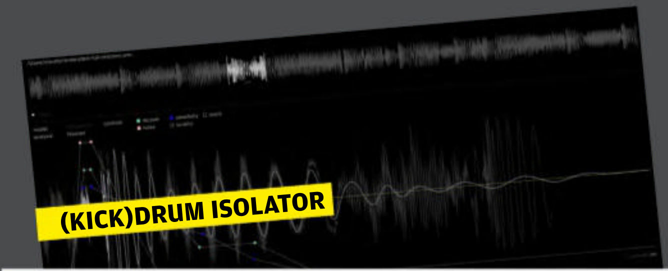
Brute monosynth with all the finesse

Zampler//RX

REX and SFZ player with mod Matrix & Parameter Sequencer

Halls Of Fame 3 Beat

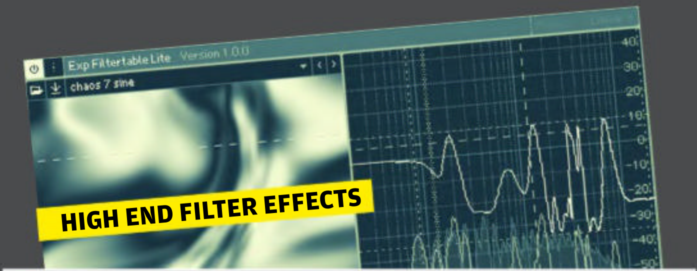
Luxury convolution reverb with Lexicon, Bricasti & EMT


(KICK)DRUM ISOLATOR

Rare DSP drumclone

Drumclone by Rare DSP allows you to extract and modify high-quality individual drum sounds from complex audio sources such as songs, samples or any recording with percussive elements.

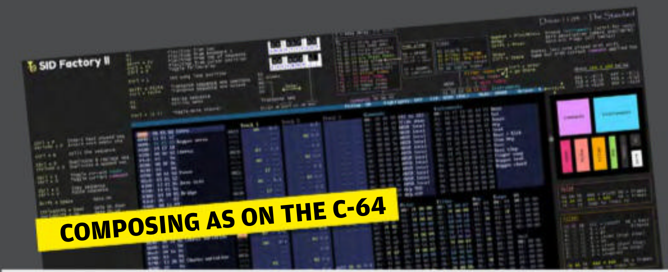
Download: see page 9 | Info: raredsp.com win | mac


Exp Filtertable Lite Version 1.0.0
chaos 7 sine
HIGH END FILTER EFFECTS

Exp Filtertable Lite

With Exp Filtertable you can create complex filters that are otherwise difficult to implement. The tool works like a filter version of a wavetable. However, the Lite version does without some features.

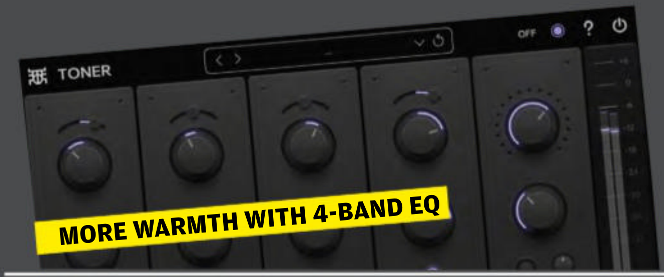
Download: see page 9 | Info: expdsp.com win


SID Factory II
COMPOSING AS ON THE C-64

SID Factory II

Experience creative music composition with a classic tracker instead of a modern DAW. SID Factory II gives you the feeling of working on a Commodore 64 and the sound takes you back to the 80s.

Download: see page 9 | Info: blog.chordian.net/sf2 win | mac | linux


TONER
OFF
MORE WARMTH WITH 4-BAND EQ

Outobugi Toner

Give your sound more transparency and warmth with the Toner mixing and mastering plug-in from Outobugi. It is a four-band EQ that is used for sound shaping with saturation and de-emphasis.

Download: see page 9 | Info: outobugi.com win

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Beat

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TECHNO MASTERCLASS

behringer
SYNCUSSION SY-1

Whether melodic, hard or hypnotic - Techno regularly reinvents itself, but the essence remains: „The beat has to go on and on". That's why we've got the answer to all your questions about production here! From choosing the right kick to clever synth layering to the latest trends in sound design - we'll show you step by step how to build rumbles, create hissing hats and find catchy melodies. In other words, Techno with hit potential! **From page 18**

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Make your studio more valuable! This month there's more than 12 GB of plug-ins, sounds and samples for your tracks.

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With his "ep #1", Severin Kantereit surprises with electro-acoustic pop and softly crackling electronics. It's not a release designed to grab the headlines – but the hearts.

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More than ever, maximalism rules supreme in the music industry. Albums are getting longer to the point of turning into playlists. No genre has driven this development more than Hip-Hop. Here, the production process has exceeded any previously reasonable measure of productivity. Impressive? Without a doubt. But some things do fall by the wayside.

Test: Syncussion SY-1

Is the replica of the iconic drum synth an alternative to the rare original? **Page 72**

Portrait: i Häxa

The British project i Häxa combines electronic sounds from Industrial, Pop and Trip-Hop with mythologically inspired lyrics and a magical atmosphere. The duo, consisting of singer Rebecca Need-Menear and producer Peter Miles, talk about their debut album, which is divided into four chapters and uses handcrafted elements in its production. **Page 42**

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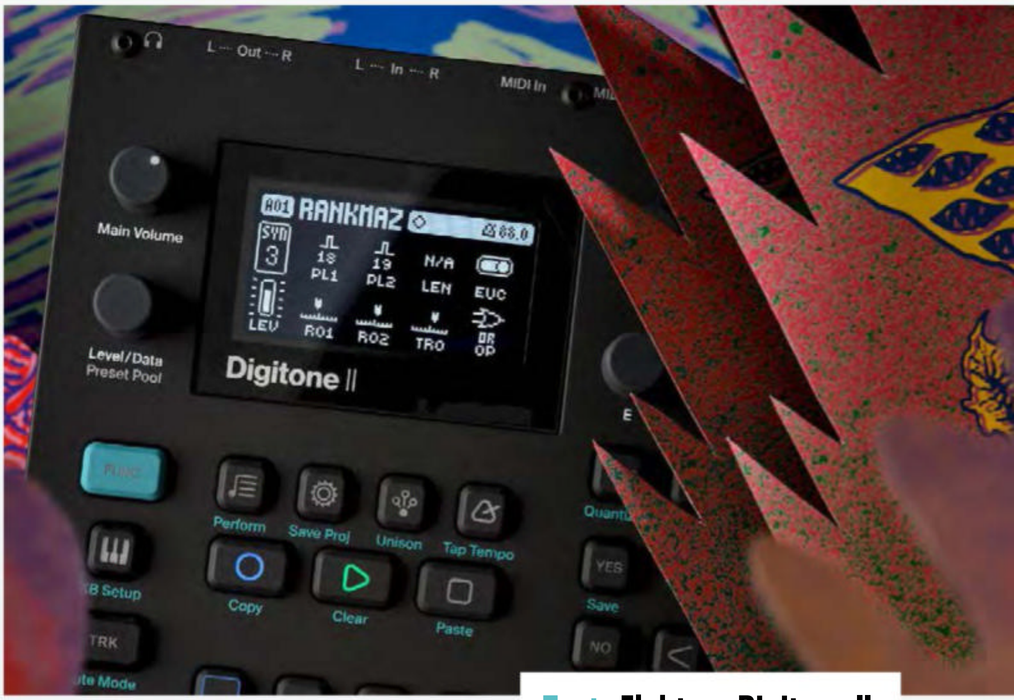
www.beat.de


Main Volume
Level/Data
Preset Pool
Digitone II
Perform
Save Proj
Unison
Tap Tempo
Copy
Clear
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Test: Elektron Digitone II

Digitone has now also received a complete overhaul in version 2. Find out what the groovebox with FM synthesis can do more or better in version 2 in our test. **Page 69**

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Navigator: Best of Beat # 229

The common thread: Beat issue 02/2025

For many years, Beat has been inspiring its readers not only with practical and musical topics, but above all with the tight integration of editorial content. From the very beginning, Beat has been about creating, about the structured building of ideas and the common thread – in the magazine as well as in the tracks. This navigator shows you the highlights of this issue andallows you to see the big picture.

Special: Techno Masterclass

Whether melodic, hard or hypnotic - Techno regularly reinvents itself, but the essence remains: „The beat has to go on and on". That's why we've got the answer to all your questions about production here! From choosing the right kick to clever synth layering to the latest trends in sound design - we'll show you step by step how to build rumbles, create hissing hats and find catchy melodies. In other words, Techno with hit potential! **From page 18**

Test: Elektron Digitone II

Now that the sample-based Digitakt has already been given a complete overhaul, version 2 of the Digitone synthesizer is of course following. Find out what the groovebox with FM synthesis can do more or better in version 2 in our test. **Page 69**

Zampler & MPC Expansion: Synth Classics II

Whether you produce Synthwave, Techno, House, Electro, Trance, EBM or Ambient – with Synth Classic II you get cult sounds that enrich productions of any genre. Our brand new sound bank for Zampler and Akai's MPC series features 79 powerful basses, multi-faceted lead and synth sounds as well as shimmering pads. In our workshop, we'll show you that these are also ideal for tech house tracks. **Page 66**

Test: Behringer Syncussion SY-1

Syncussion SY-1 is a two-channel drum synth that drum manufacturer Pearl developed in 1979 to complement acoustic drums. As Techno music became popular in the 90s, the sounds were also used for hard bass and bone-dry percussion, which gave the Syncussion cult status and still leads to high used prices today. We have tested for you whether the inexpensive Behringer replica is an alternative to the rare original. **Page 72**

Digital Culture: The age of productivity

More than ever, maximalism rules supreme in the music industry. Albums are getting longer to the point of turning into playlists. No genre has driven this development more than Hip-Hop. Here, the production process has exceeded any previously reasonable measure of productivity. Impressive? Without a doubt. But some things do fall by the wayside. **Page 46**

Beat

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Facts | Opinions | News | Products

Magazine

by Carl-Philipp Schmeller

Foldable MIDI Controller from Korg

The nanoKEY Fold is a new compact, foldable MIDI controller from Korg that is particularly recommended for mobile musicians and producers. With 25 pressure-sensitive membrane keys, which can be optimally customised with LED support and the innovative ‘Easy Scale’ mode with 15 different scales, creative work is possible anywhere. This mode ensures that only the notes contained in the selected scale sound. The keyboard offers practical features such as a powerful arpeggiator with 15 rhythm patterns, a chord mode and a split function that enables two independent control areas for the keyboard halves. Two multifunctional touch sliders allow CC control or playing scales with simple swipe movements - inspired by KORG‘s KAOSSILATOR series. All settings can be saved in 15 scenes. The nanoKEY Fold is immediately ready for use with computers, tablets and smartphones via USB-C. In addition, classic MIDI equipment can be controlled via the standard MIDI interface.

The nanoKEY Fold is now available for 129 Euros.

More info

korg.com

Eventide introduces H90 Dark Harmonizer

SELECT
PERFORM
01 Clean Ambient*
ACTIVE
Eventide
H90

Eventide has released the limited Dark Harmonizer Edition for the popular H90 multi-effect pedal. In addition to the 52 effect algorithms of the serial model H9 Max Harmonizer, there are 14 new effect algorithms: Polyphony, prism shift, Bouquet delay, head space, weedwacker, Even-Vibe, wormhole, instant flanger, instant phaser and SP2016 reverb. Hundreds of program combinations thus provide creative effects that can be used across genres and for a variety of instruments. The effect routing can be serial or parallel. The dual mode allows for the simultaneous processing of two independent stereo signals. There are four inputs and outputs (including two mono inserts), an intuitive user interface tailored to the user, and an integrated tuner. Additionally, the SIFT technology enables modernized polyphonic pitch-shifting. The device also features five push-turn knobs. The H90 Control software, which serves to edit programs, is included in the purchase price.

The H90 Dark Harmonizer is now available for 1099 Euros in retail.

More info

eventideaudio.com I sound-service.eu

Studio headphones for mixing and mastering by beyerdynamic

With the closed DT 1770 PRO MKII and the open DT 1990 PRO MKII, beyerdynamic heralds the second generation of their flagship studio headphones. While the DT 1770 PRO MKII is intended primarily for recording, monitoring, and editing, the focus of the DT 1990 PRO MKII is particularly on mixing, mastering, and editing. The handmade models, which feature a durable spring steel headband construction, are designed for hours of studio use. This is thanks to the velour ear pads that prevent possible heat build-up. However, not only is the wearing comfort advantageous, but the ear pads are also supposed to convince with high sound insulation. In addition, the new TESLA.45 driver is said to further increase the sound fidelity of both headphones. The transmission range of both models extends from 5 Hz to 40,000 Hz. Compared to the previous model, the highs at around 8 kHz have been slightly reduced. At the same time, the detailed treble above 10 kHz of the predecessor has been maintained.

Both models are now available for 549 Euros each.

More info

beyerdynamic.de

DT 1990 PRO
DT 1770 PRO

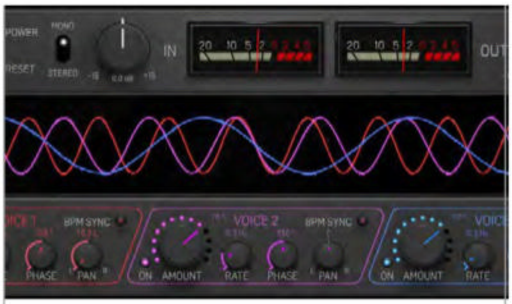
Premium headphones for more bass from Audeze

The CRBN2 is the latest model among the high-end headphones from Audeze, designed in an over-ear design. The open headphone is equipped with electrostatic carbon nanotube drivers and is composed of carbon fiber, stainless steel, leather, magnesium, and polymer acetate, among others. Ferrous metals were avoided due to magnetic fields. The headphone covers a frequency range from 10 Hz to 40 kHz. The maximum sound pressure level is specified at over 120 dB. Thanks to SLAM technology (Symmetric Linear Acoustic Modulator), which aims to improve bass frequencies and reduce distortions, the CRBN2 is claimed by the manufacturer to offer the most lifelike physical bass of all electrostatic headphones. The bass boost is said to be up to 5 dB compared to the previous model. Additionally, the stereo imaging is said to be advantageous for mixing.

The CRBN2 will be available from mid-December 2024 for 5995 US Dollars. In addition, an amplifier with an electrostatic output and a bias voltage of 580VDC is needed. An upgrade for the previous model is offered for 995 US Dollars.

audeze.com

More info



Rich triple chorus from IK Multimedia

IK Multimedia has released the T-RackS 6 Triad Chorus effect plug-in as a further development of the iconic Rack Chorus from the 80s. Based on the original, which has characterised many hits by artists such as Joni Mitchell, Eric Clapton and Madonna over the decades, the chorus voices have now been tripled. The Amount, Rate, Phase and Pan parameters can be changed independently for each of these voices. BPM synchronisation is also possible. Deep and lively textures are therefore possible in both mono and stereo, ensuring a lush vibe and immersive sound. Care has been taken with the digital expansion to ensure that the analogue warmth and depth is not lost. The tool is divided into three sections and contains 20 presets for bass, guitar, keys, FX, voice and more.

Triad Chorus can be used as a stand-alone plug-in or as part of the T-RackS 6 plug-in environment. It costs 99.99 Euros as a stand-alone plug-in, but 299 Euros as part of the T-RackS 6 MAX bundle. The bundle also includes a whopping 61 very good-sounding effects for mixing and mastering.

ikmultimedia.com

More info

HOFA
16th XMAS MIX CONTEST

HOFA XMAS MIX CONTEST – Win great prizes now

The HOFA training and further education institute invites you to the 16th Mix & Remix Contest! Anyone who wants to put their mixing and remixing skills to the test or simply enjoy festive studio work can take part. The task is to mix or remix this year‘s contest song ‘Santa Claus Is Coming’ - an energetic track with electro and rock elements, powerful drums, delicate flutes and violins. An expert jury of audio engineers will judge all entries, and there are prizes totalling over 26,000 Euros to be won! The main prize: 1,000 Euros each for the best mix and the best remix. High-quality hardware and software prizes are also up for grabs. Whoever collects a lot of votes in the online voting also has the chance to win a pair of studio headphones from Sennheiser. The prizes are sponsored by renowned brands such as Ableton, ADAM Audio, Arturia, Avid, beyerdynamic, Celemony, Focusrite, Image-Line, iZotope, Korg, König & Meyer, Native Instruments, Novation, Roland, Sennheiser and Steinberg. The closing date for entries is 2 February 2025, so join in and be part of this musical highlight.

hofa-contest.com

More info

Compact DJ controller with stem separation from Native Instruments

The new, compact DJ controller Traktor Z1 MK2 from Native Instruments comes in a sleek, modern design. It not only acts as a DJ mixer with two channels, but also as an audio interface with 24-bit resolution. The channels are equipped with a 3-band equaliser and can add two effects. If required, up to four decks can be used. The Z1 MK2 also has the advantage that you can customise it with mappings on the Controller Manager page. The Traktor Z1 MK2 is equipped with two cinch line outputs, a headphone output and a USB port. The software includes the latest DJ software Traktor Pro 4, which not only offers iZotope‘s mastering technology, but also the powerful stem separation. This allows you to adjust the volume of drums, basses, instruments and vocals individually on the controller. A drum machine and good-sounding effects round off the database of your track collection. The nine effects include a filter, reverb, delay and gate to choose from.

The Traktor Z1 MK2 is now available for 249 Euros in retail.

native-instruments.com

More info

TRAKTOR Z1
Z1

prolight+sound
8. – 11. April 2025
Frankfurt am Main

Save the date: Prolight + Sound 2025

Take Part in the ProAudio Area

For its 30th anniversary, Prolight + Sound, the international trade fair highlight for event and entertainment technology in the heart of Europe, is focusing on fresh impetus, knowledge transfer and networking. The focus will be on interactive offers that invite visitors to try things out and exchange ideas. For audio enthusiasts, Prolight + Sound 2025 (April 8 - 11) offers two fascinating new points of contact in Hall 11.0.

MusicOneX

With **MusicOneX**, Prolight + Sound invites you to a new, exciting chapter in the international tech trade fair scene. Three cornerstones form the conceptual core of the interactive special area: Music, Conference and Exhibition.

As a further development of the **Performance + Production Hub**, **MusicOneX** creates a unique synergy between creatives, providers, tech professionals and companies. The innovative platform focuses on the combination of artistic creativity and technical excellence. Through a practice-oriented open innovation approach, visitors, artists and organizations are actively networked with each other throughout the event - creating a basis for special experiences that sets **MusicOneX** apart from other formats. On over 3,000 m², you can embark on an immersive journey through the world of music.

This is „MusicOneX“:

- Worlds of Experience: Subject areas such as Entertainment, Studio and Home offer practical insights into modern technologies and invite you to try them out for yourself.
- Hands-On-Experiences: Test and experience how sound, lighting and video technology interact in dynamic workflows and immerse yourself in workstations consisting of a fusion of different manufacturer brands.
- Workshops and panels: Experts share their know-how on digital trends. Among other things, they will discuss how affordable tools and AI solutions can support creative professionals and event service providers in the independent technical implementation of their ideas.
- 360° Stage: Product presentations and performances on a central circular stage with LED wall.
- Performance: Interactive Q&A sessions and showcases with international product specialists and artists.
- Competition: Live events, such as the DJ World Championship bring action and energy to the area and ensure thrilling experiences on-site and online.
- Content Creation & Social Media: Exciting stage shows, interviews with manufacturers, and competitions provide inspiring content for Social Media.

You can find out more information about „MusicOneX“ here: www.musiconex.com

MixLab

The new **MixLab** is all about the world of mixing consoles. It combines the areas of live sound and studio in an interactive special area that offers sound enthusiasts a holistic experience through the fusion of practical and creative aspects.

The LIVE SOUND area is aimed at FOH, Sound and Event technicians and offers practice-oriented workshops, interactive mixing console demos and certified training courses with renowned manufacturers and FOHs. The focus is on combining theory and practice in an innovative concept and promoting specialist knowledge.

- Hands-on: Work with professionals on mixing consoles, audio systems and effects equipment to learn techniques and concepts.
- Simulation of real scenarios: Mixing a live concert, creating monitor mixes and optimizing a PA system.
- Live Recording: Real-time optimization of recording quality and mixing process.
- Workshops: Industry experts offer hands-on certified training on advanced mixing techniques and live sound.

The STUDIO Area is aimed at sound engineers, producers, sound designers and musicians. Trade visitors can look over the shoulders of professionals in a fully equipped Mixing & Mastering Studio, attend workshops and test analog outboard equipment and digital plug-ins in a real-world environment.

- Exclusive: A professional Mixing and Mastering Studio in Hall 11.0, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and optimized acoustics.
- Workshops: with renowned Producers, Sound Engineers and Universities on topics such as Mixing, Mastering, Recording, Acoustics and many more.
- Lectures and discussion panels: on new audio technologies, innovative production techniques and current industry topics.
- Hands-on: Exercises on high-quality analog and digital outboard gear - such as equalizers, compressors and effects - to experience their use and sonic possibilities.

In addition to the Hands-on experience area with interactive stations and the Workshop Zone with a professional recording studio and certificate programs, a Networking Lounge invites you to connect and exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere.

In addition to **MusicOneX** and the **MixLab**, Prolight + Sound 2025 offers a number of other hot spots for audio professionals, including the **Live Sound Arena**, the **Silent Stage** and the **Live & Demo Box** with product presentations and performances. The **ProAudio College**, which is organized jointly with the Verband Deutscher Tonmeister e.V. (VDT), hosts top-class international workshops and seminars for professionals and interested young professionals in the Live and Studio sectors. ⁘

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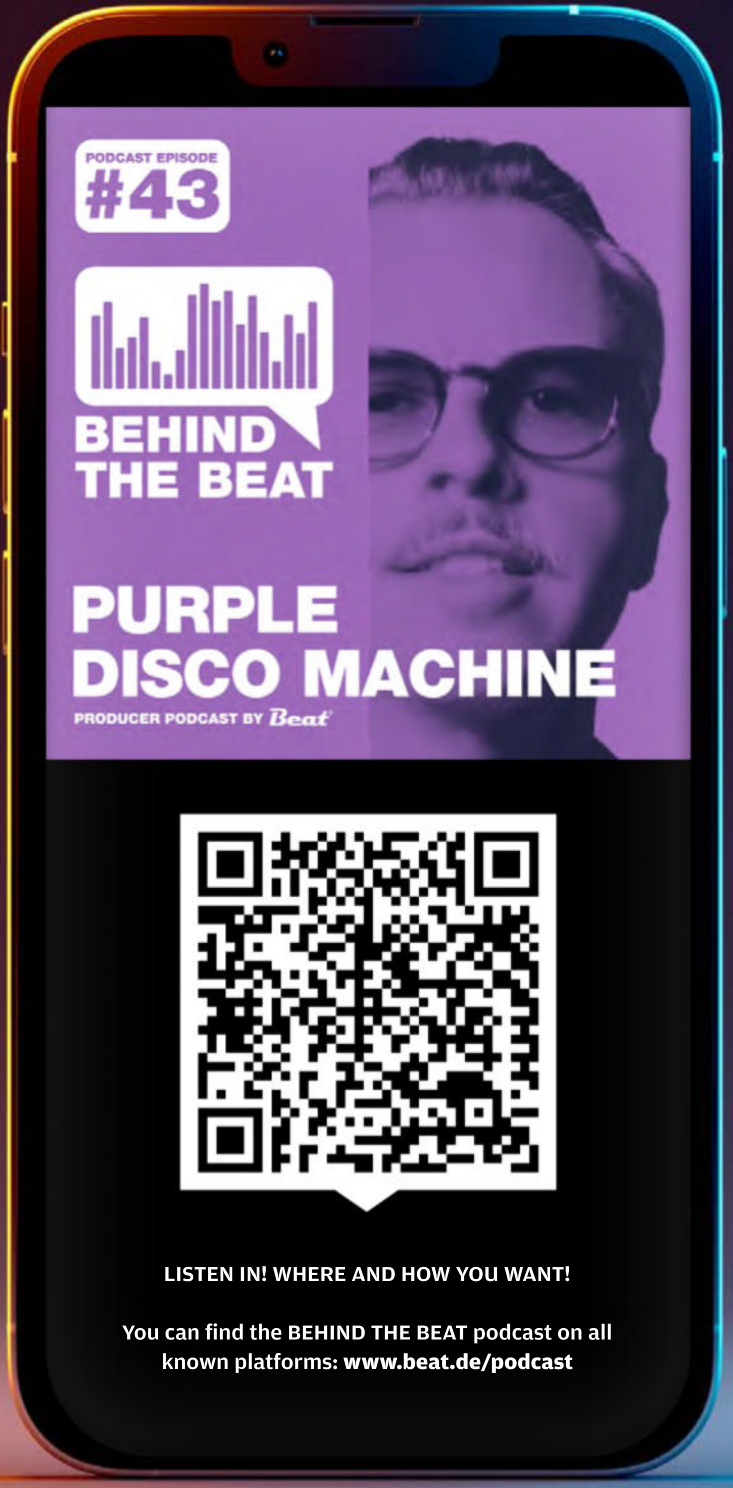
BEHIND THE BEAT

Episode #43
with Purple Disco Machine
Retrofuturistic NeoDisco

Tobias Fischer is your host for the Behind the Beat Podcast. This episode is dedicated to Tino Piontek aka Purple Disco Machine, whose latest album of retrofuturistic NeoDisco sets off in search of paradise.

If you‘re craving respect as an artist, disco is probably not the first place to go looking for it. In 1979, “serious” music fans were so enraged by its slickness and commercial success that they met up in a stadium to blow up disco records with dynamite. Thankfully, Disco Demolition Night would remain a one-off event and today, the scene may be more alive than ever. Which hasn‘t stopped many from deriding it as superficial.

Timo Piontek couldn‘t care less. To him, the supposed weaknesses of disco are its strengths. In his music, the dancefloor turns into a place to let go, the beats open up a gateway to a better world, seemingly simple lyrics become mantras for uniting us. Accordingly, he has designed his third full-length album - the follow-up to internati-



LISTEN IN! WHERE AND HOW YOU WANT!

You can find the BEHIND THE BEAT podcast on all known platforms: **www.beat.de/podcast**

Spotify · amazon music · Apple Podcasts · Pocket Casts · Castbox · Google Podcasts · podcast.de · deezer · evosonic onal breakthrough Exotica - which earned him a Grammy as well as remix request from Kylie Minogue, Lady Gaga and Dua Lipa - as a concept album documenting an inward journey to paradise. In terms of songwriting, the album represents a radical change. Instead of withdrawing into the studio and hiding behind his impressive array of equipment, Tino invited some of his personal favourites to work on tracks in person. Guests include Metronomy and funk legend Nile Rodgers as well as indie rock singer Sophie and the Giants, with whom he wrote and scored global hit „Hypnotised". The external input once again enriches the Purple Disco Machine cosmos, but Tino has also gone through immense growth as an artist himself. His arrangements are more cosmic than ever and the sound design deep and threedimensional. Seven-minute centerpiece „Paradisco" sounds like a dream of Yello, fusion jazz and a slow-motion version of Donna Summer's „I need Love."

Thanks to the abundance of magical moments, leading Swedish disco producer Martin Brodin felt compelled to inform me that there are exactly two artists „who nailed that balance between honoring the classic sound and pushing it forward: Purple Disco Machine and Todd Terje." This kind of respect is rare for a disco artist. On the basis of Paradise, meanwhile, it is more than deserved.

www.beat.de/podcast

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Editorial

BEAT introduces itself

Marco Scherer

Producer, Sound Designer, DJ and Gear Nerd with a big soft spot for samplers. Marco has been making music for as long as he can remember, loves his studio and even runs around outside with microphones and recorders to find and bend the best sounds. Produces Psytrance under Datacult, Techno under the name Villa Violet and creates with his „Drum Depot“ kits for current drum samplers. At BEAT, he is the contact person for (almost) everything and puts his heart and soul into it.

Mario Schumacher

Mario has been on board since the first issue. His musical output is as versatile as his contributions to BEAT: While his Edge Of Dawn explores the field of tension between Synth Pop and Electro, Mario produces Cinematic Electronic Music for Film, TV and Advertising under the name Raging Silence for, among others, Mercedes Benz, Porsche, Audi, Philips and Puma.

Jan Wilking

Synthesizers, samplers and drum machines have defined his life for a good four decades. Inspired by the emerging Synth Pop of the early 80s, particularly the first concerts as a budding teenager like Depeche Mode, Nitzer Ebb and Shock Therapy shaped his further development, which led to the founding of the EBM/Industrial project STERIL in 1990, which was successful mainly in the USA. From the simple cassette recorder, Casio keyboard and mono sampler with mini-memory to the modern DAW with almost unlimited possibilities, Jan has witnessed the development of electronic music production, with his personal conclusion: Less is often more!

Sascha Blach

Passionate music nerd who likes variety as a listener, as well as a singer, musician and producer, because he thinks variety is what makes life interesting - from melancholic Folk to Pop, Electronica and Techno to Indie Rock and Metal, there‘s a lot here. Busy songwriter. Besides his own various projects, he also makes production music. Convinced Apple and Logic user. Loves guitar pedals. Likes to work on a mix for months and still claims to work effectively. Prefers profundity to small talk. That‘s why he‘s also doing extensive interviews at BEAT. In short: Somehow damn versatile, our Sascha!

Maya Consuelo Sternel

Maya Consuelo Sternel, a.k.a. Donna Maya, is a musician, producer and sound artist. She plays Theremin and releases Underground Techno. After earning her Audio Engineer degree, she worked in New York at Unique Recording in Times Square, overseeing productions from Run DMC to Joe Lynn Turner. She is an Ableton Certified Trainer, runs Upstart Electronic Music Education and is co-founder of the Ableton User Group Berlin.

Tobias Fischer

Journalist, author, label owner, listener. Tobias has been writing about music for almost 20 years; 15 of them for BEAT. In doing so, he prefers to go deep below the surface. This is also the case in his „Behind the Beat“ podcast. As long as there is music, Tobias will ask questions - either for new book projects or, in the meanwhile, for the almost 4000 interviews for his project „15 Questions“.

Daniel Bock

New addition to the BEAT team. Actually a guitarist and actually plays Funk, Rock, Alternative & Metal, but secretly always squinted to the synths and Electronic Music. Tells himself that jamming is actually the real music making and producing tracks is not really necessary. Loves gear and creative gear. What would be better for this than a modular system? Consequently, therefore, also responsible for the Eurorack corner of the BEAT.

Carl-Philipp Schmeller

Carl-Philipp has been with Beat since issue 1. His home is Commercial Electronic Music, which he has been passionate about since the 90s and also produces in his own home studio. He also conducts seminars in the field. At Beat, he is responsible for News, Workshops, Reviews and Tests; especially for the last two years now for the English edition and for Beat.de.

Ricarda Becker

Good Fairy, Layout Fairy or simply Graphic Designer... Ricarda has many titles, but only one task: to make the magazine as beautiful as possible. The graphic design is analogous to music: underneath the final result lies a lot of work, sweat and technology that you don‘t even see when you just look at it. We are all the more pleased to have her!

Dagmar Pawlowsky

Responsible for sales and co-operations. Dagmar loves Berlin, her dog Leo and BEAT magazine. She enjoys listening to Electro Punk and always likes to be at the front at concerts. In her spare time, she organises small concerts and other events.

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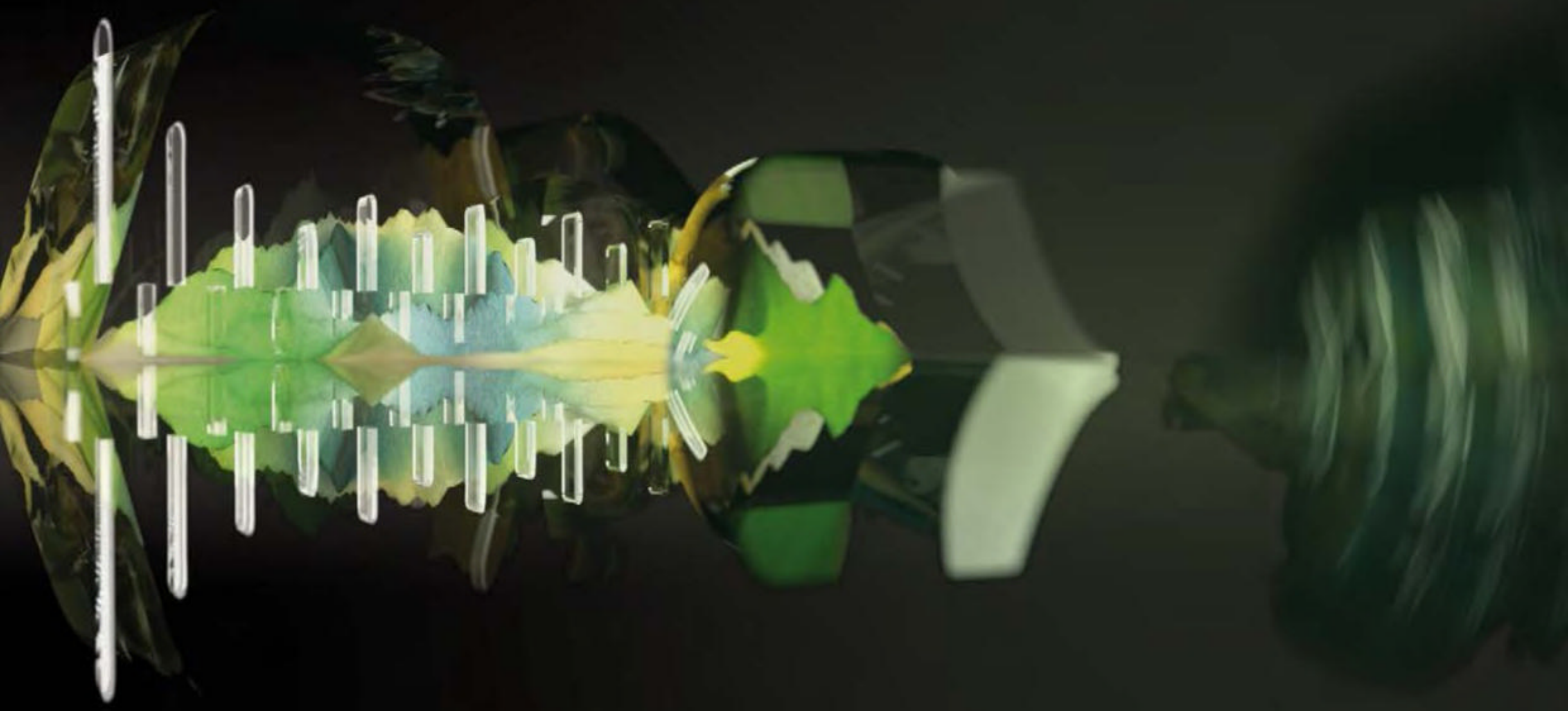

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CRASHCOURSE

TECHNO MASTERCLASS

BRUTALISM, LETYAGO & I HATE MODELS

FROM HARD TO HYPNOTIC

Whether melodic, hard or hypnotic - Techno regularly reinvents itself, but the essence remains: „The beat has to go on and on". That's why we've got the answer to all your questions about production here! From choosing the right kick to clever synth layering to the latest trends in sound design - we'll show you step by step how to build rumbles, create hissing hats and find catchy melodies. In other words, Techno with hit potential!

by Laura Emiliano, Ruben Mantel, Marco Scherer

Don‘t forget: You can find all the workshop files in the magazine downloads!

Where is Techno today?

What it used to be is easy to read up on. But it is difficult to quickly explain who and what the term Techno currently stands for. The fact is: although countless subgenres have now emerged and the main music style has long since outgrown the underground, dark basements with reinforced concrete walls, strobe lights and sweaty bodies are still as much a part of it as they were on the first day. Alongside glamorous Ibiza clubs, parties on luxury yachts and raves with a dress code, perhaps more as part of the whole, rather than as a unique attitude to life without compromise, as it was in the early days. Ultimately, the course of every development follows an expansion: the original part that was so successful moves into the mainstream and underneath it, a number of new niches are formed for the next generations - both in terms of genres and audience.

The current trends

Two clear trends can be identified: After the Melodic Techno phase has apparently passed its peak, the sound is now faster, harder and more brutal - 140 tempo and more are almost standard. Tracks from successful acts such as Brutalismus 3000, Sara Landry, I Hate Models or Klangkünstler prove this quite clearly. But the much-hyped Techno rumbles are also slowly being replaced by rolling basses with 16th note patterns borrowed from Psytrance - or simple offbeats that were hardly used a few years ago.

The range is growing. This special will therefore not be an almanac for every existing form of Techno - we would probably have to write a comprehensive novel for that - but will focus on the elements of the most popular subgenres. On the other hand, these can easily be adapted for your favorite genre, because certain things are universal. And thinking outside the box has never done any harm.

Let‘s get started?

Further down, we‘ve selected a few essential classics for you to get you started, which played a key role in the development of Techno. Then we‘ll get started with workshops, enriched with essential tips and interviews from and with Björn Torwellen and The Jeyenne, as well as even more workshops on drums, hypnotic hooklines and arranging tracks so that you have the finished track at the end.

So, let‘s get started. Put on your work clothes, because there‘s a lot to do this time and it‘s worth it. Have fun tinkering and making your new tracks!

The 6 most important Techno classics

transmat
RHYTHIM IS RHYTHIM
33⅓
A

Strings of Life – Derrick May (1987)

An iconic track that stands out for its catchy piano riffs and energetic rhythms. It is considered one of the milestones of Detroit Techno and has made the genre popular worldwide.

TRAX Records
PHUTURE
1. PHUTURE JACKS
2. YOUR ONLY FRIEND

Acid Tracks – Phuture (1987)

Often referred to as the first Acid House track, this track influenced not only Techno but also the entire electronic music genre through its innovative 303 basslines.

Energy Flash – Joey Beltram (1990)

Known for its hard, driving bass and hypnotic Acid sounds, this track defined the sound of early Rave Techno and influenced numerous producers.

SPEEDY J
PULL OVER

Pullover – Speedy J (1991)

A track that became known for its catchy melody and driving rhythms and shaped the European Techno scene of the early 90s.

The Bells
Jeff Mills

The Bells – Jeff Mills (1996)

A minimalistic but powerful track that impresses with its distinctive bell sounds and driving beats. It is part of many DJ sets.

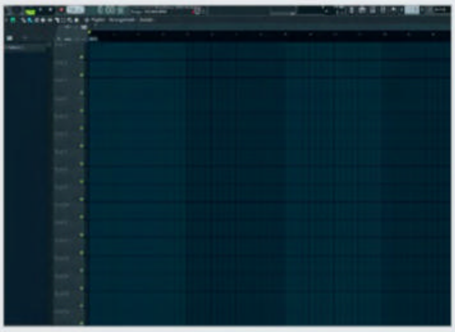
Windowlicker – Aphex Twin (1999)

Although often mentioned in the IDM context, this track shows the experimental side of Techno and impresses with complex arrangements and innovative sound designs.

Hands-on: Banger Techno

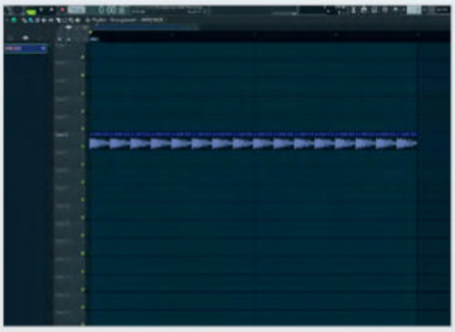
Sounds like Brutalismus 3000

The hard, dirty sound of the Berlin producer duo, which brings you back to the dance floor even after 10 hours of partying, is being celebrated by more and more people in the truest sense of the word. The rule is: it has to be a bang. We'll take a look at how you can get the sound of Brutalismus 3000 into your own DAW in a moment.



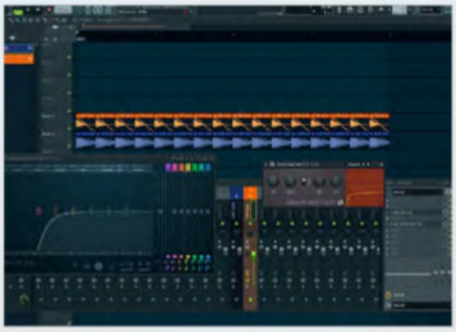
1 Let's begin

We start by setting a very fast tempo between 150 and 170 bpm. The production is generally based on the principle: less is more. This means that important elements such as the kick will later find more space in the mix. In this workshop we will produce a drop, with the verse and bridge being derived from individual elements of the drop with a little variation.



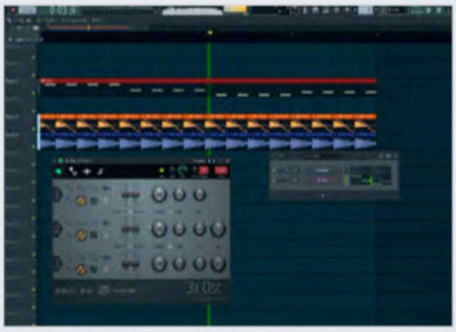
2 Hard Kick

Let's start with the most important element, which is of course the kick. Regardless of whether you synthesize it yourself or use it from a library, you should pay attention to a hard attack and a long release time in the low frequencies so that the kick almost completely fills a quarter note. Of course, as always in Techno, we place it as four on the floor.



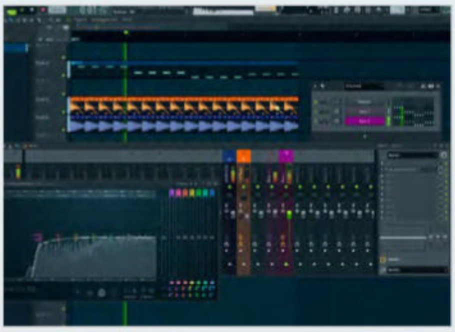
3 Top Kick

Because one kick isn't hard and dirty enough for us, we'll take another shorter kick with a transient that's as present as possible. In the mixer, we'll then distort it with Fruity Fast Dist and remove the low frequencies below 150Hz with Fruity parametric EQ 2 to prevent phase problems with the first kick.



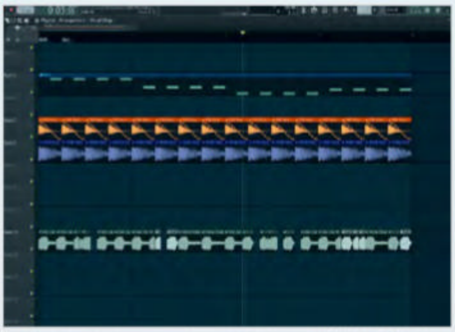
4 Bass

With the 3x Osc we synthesize a simple bass by switching all oscillators to sawtooth, pitching two of them down by 12 semitones, the other by 24 and turning the Phase Rand to about 10%. The bass plays classically in the offbeat, four times four different notes from the key of the song, which was determined by the tonal part of the kick.



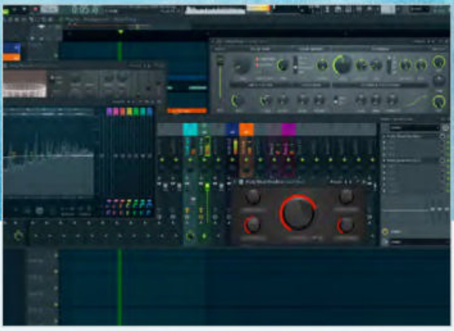
5 Layering

What's better than one bass? That's right, two. Find or create another bass that plays the same pattern as the first. Make sure that the sounds don't compete with each other, but complement each other. In contrast to the first bass, a percussive sound would be a good idea. Again, cut the low frequencies.



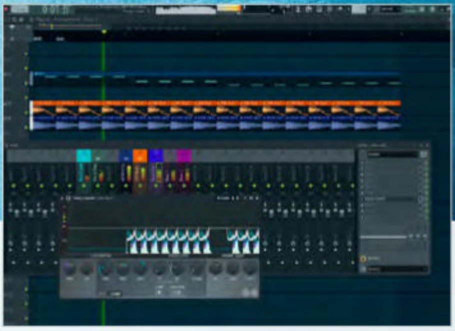
6 Vocal chops

As the main melodic element for the first part of the drop, use vocal chops that you either cut yourself from the vocals in the verse or take from a sample library. The priority should be the rhythm of the vocal chops. Once the appropriate rhythm has been determined, a melody can be created by pitching individual chops.



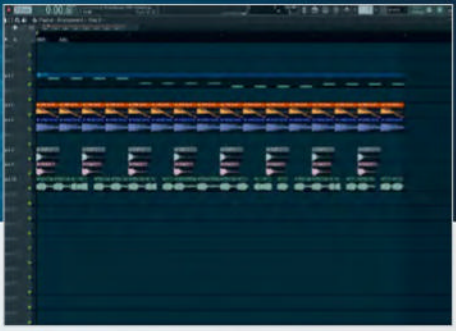
7 Vocal mixing

Another very characteristic feature of Brutalism 3000 is the heavily distorted sound of vocals. To achieve this, route them into a mixer channel and use Fruity Blood Overdrive to distort them heavily. Also, again set a low cut at around 150Hz and send the signal to a channel with a long reverb and a ping pong delay.



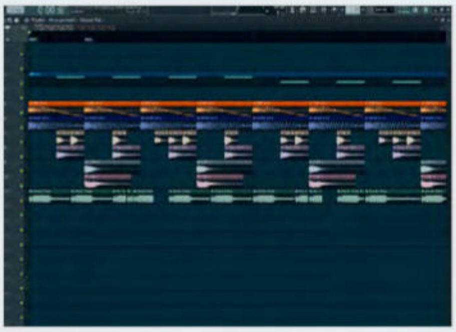
8 Sidechain

So that the kick can always assert itself in the mix, we now sidechain the basses to the kick. To do this, first create a bus into which both basses are sent, then send the signal of the kick via sidechain to the bus and finally use the Fruity Limiter in the Comp Section with a moderate ratio and low attack time for the sidechain compression.



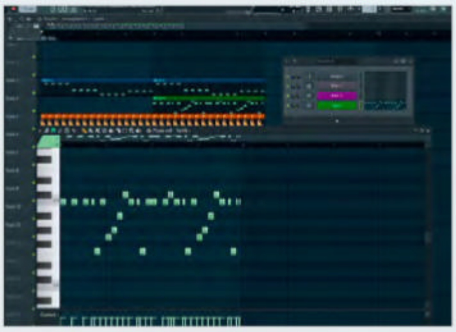
9 Clap

The basic framework is already in place. Now let‘s develop the idea further with additional drums. Put a clap in the classic EDM style on every second beat. Here, too, it is a good idea to layer. Use one clap mainly for desired transients and another with a little more sustain and release, i.e. for the end of the clap sound.



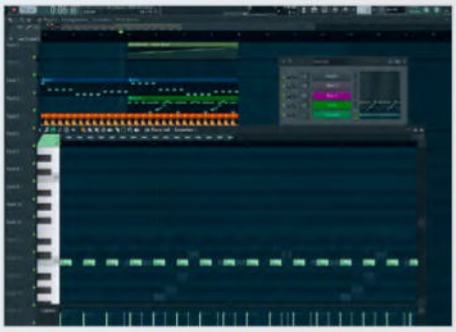
10 Hats

While we‘re on the subject of drums, hi hats are a must. Use an open hi hat, which always plays in the offbeat without variation, to drive the song forward. Also use close hats, which play more frequently but not quite as monotonously as the open hi hat, until a simple but powerful groove is created.



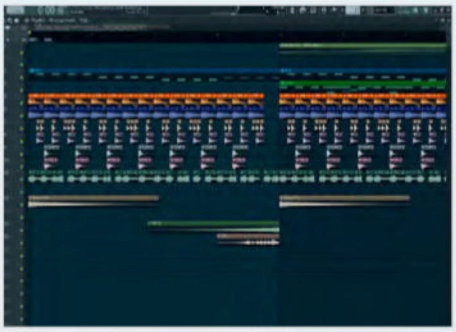
11 Synth

Now let‘s turn to the second part of the drop: For variety, a synth is added that plays the same or a similar melody as the vocal chops. Brutalismus 3000 also uses simple but distinctive sawtooth sounds here. It is important to sidechain the synth to the kick and set a low cut at 150Hz.



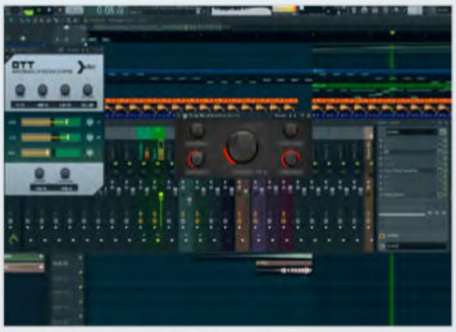
12 Screeches

In addition to the synth, there is also a screech sound, which usually consists of a sawtooth curve that pitches down quickly. This sound is also sidechained and played on the root note of each kick. Then pitch the entire sound up by 2 octaves over four or eight bars to create a riser for more tension.



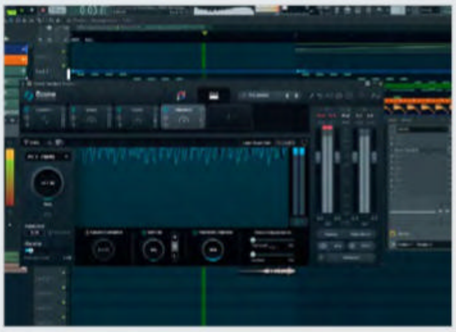
13 FX

To round things off, use effects to bring the individual parts of the song together. Downlifters at the beginning of a new part and risers to lead into a new part are good options, which can easily be obtained by pitching white noise. Use fills and leave out a kick before the new part for a more exciting transition.



14 Mixing

As mentioned at the beginning, Brutalism 3000 follows a minimalist approach, with few elements that have plenty of space to develop. So try to get the most out of the few elements with distortion, compression and reverb. Make sure that the low end stays clean and punchy.

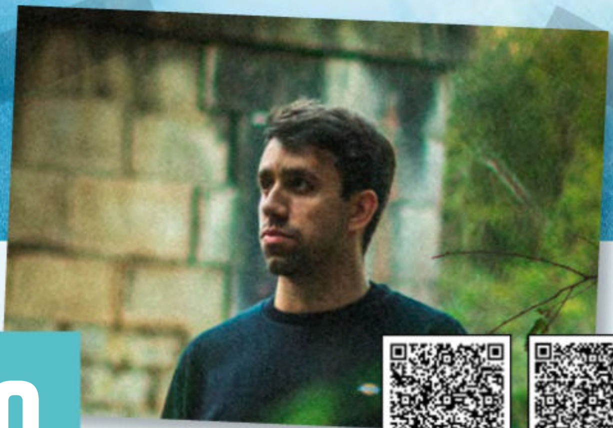


15 Mastering

Mastering follows the same principle, but should only be the finishing touches to an already good mix. Use a stereo imager to fill the width of the stereo field. As a final plugin, use a limiter which, with a short attack time, compresses the song nicely and only lets through the short, important transients of the kick.

Hands-on: Rumbles

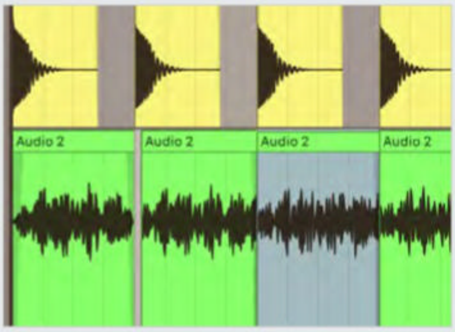
How your tracks shake like Temudo



Demo 1

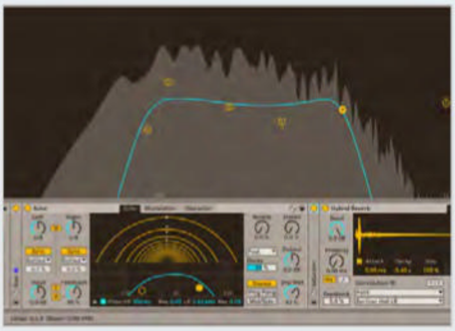
Demo 2

The dark sound wavering around the 909, the seething thunder in the Industrial Techno banger - Techno rumble is an integral part of many Dark Techno styles. And easy to produce. We'll show you how to build exactly the rumble you want, from easy beginner workflows to professional hacks. In any DAW.


Audio 2
Audio 2
Audio 2
Audio 2

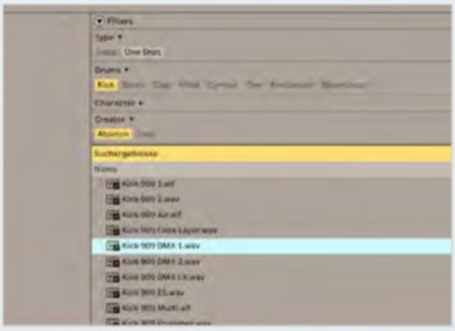
1 Origins

Where does Techno rumble come from, who started it? There is no consensus on this, even after extensive research, in existing articles or forum discussions. Some people hear the first Rumbles in tracks from the early 90s, while others believe that Rumbles emerged in the late 00s or early 2010s.



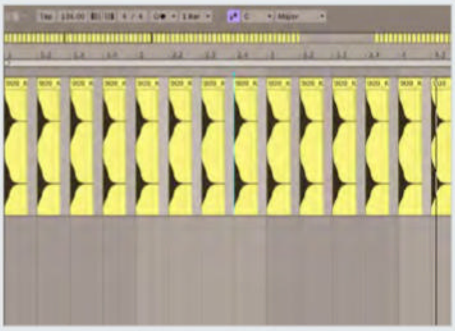
2 How does rumble work?

The basic idea is actually a mortal sin in mixing and producing: reverb and delay on the kick. But it is precisely these two effects, in combination with strong EQing around the lower mids, that create the threatening rumble and thunder. The kick itself usually comes from the 909, the more evil and distorted, the better.


Filters
Type
One Shot
Drums
Kick
Character
Creator
Ableton

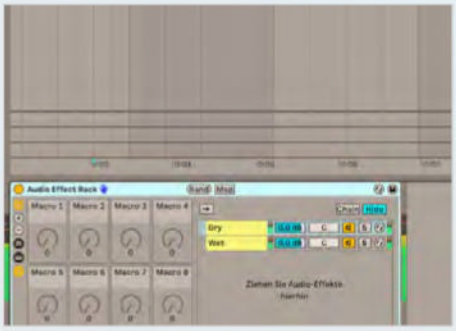
3 Get the 909 sound

After 808 kicks and 808 basses, there is hardly anything as common as one-shot samples of 909 kicks. Almost every DAW should include a corresponding drum instrument, otherwise a quick Google search will lead you to countless free sample packs with 909 drums. You can also find the free “Ultimate 909” pack at Studio Drive.



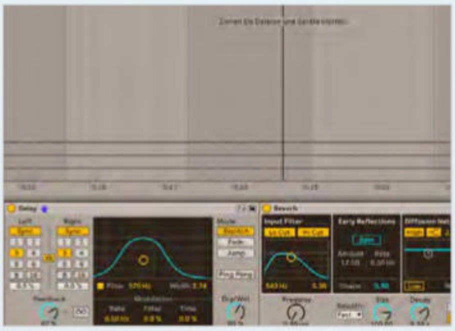
4 Four-to-the-Floor

Even though there are always variations to be heard, the blunt quarter time, the four-to-the-floor kick, is, in the truest sense, the rhythmic centerpiece of most Techno tracks. It's up to you whether you put the kick sample directly on an audio track and copy it in the grid or put it in the drum machine of your DAW and then draw MIDI notes.


Audio Effect Rack
Macro 1
Macro 2
Macro 3
Macro 4
Macro 5
Macro 6
Macro 7
Macro 8
Dry
Wet
Ziehen Sie Audio-Effekte hierhin

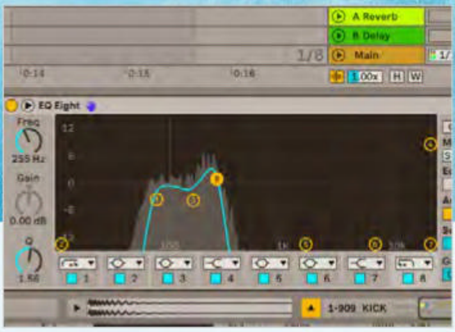
5 Dry / Wet

Before we get to the effects, a recommendation for the basic setup: Make sure that your DAW also has a way to hear the dry kick without effects in addition to the rumble. Whether in the drum rack in Ableton, as a send effect or as a double track: otherwise the effects will blur the kick so that it becomes undefined.


Delay
Reverb
Input Filter
Early Reflections
Diffusion

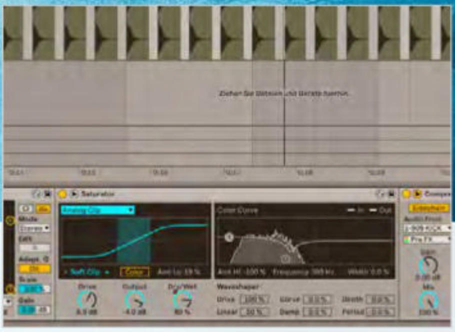
6 Reverb and delay

Let's start with reverb and delay. In terms of order, I would always apply delay first, then reverb. The delay should also be set to either quarter notes or dotted eighth notes and both effects should be completely wet or mix = 100%. The decay should also not be too long, this depends on the BPM of your track.



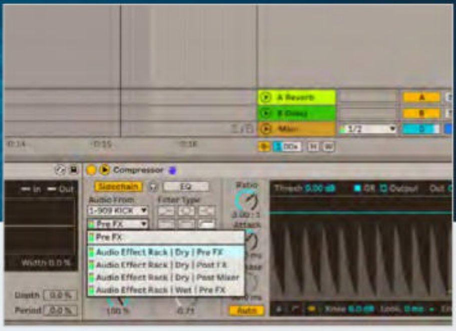
7 Filter / EQ

The combination you‘ve just created should result in a droning noise even in conjunction with the dry signal. It only becomes a techno rumble when the reverb/delay signal is heavily filtered. So an EQ (or two filters, one low pass, one high pass) is placed behind the delay and reverb. Its low pass filter is at around 500 Hertz.



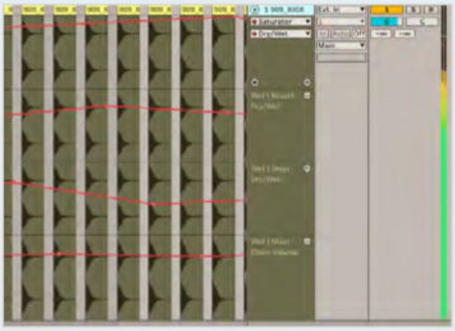
8 Distortion

Use a high pass filter to filter out everything below 100 Hertz so that the dry kick comes through better. Now the sound design begins with a distortion effect. Experiment to see where in the effects chain the distortion effect produces the best results for you: before the delay, between the delay and reverb, or between the reverb and EQ.



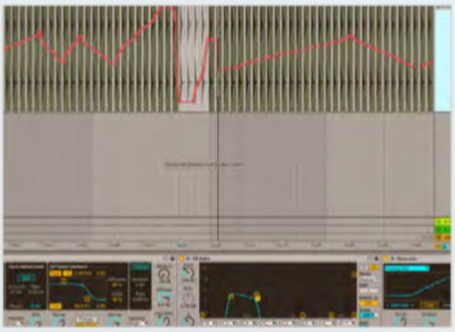
9 Sidechaining

In Techno productions, we can‘t avoid sidechaining - the suppression of the bass signal when the kick is playing. The quickest option is a compressor on the rumble track, with the dry kick track routed to its sidechain input. This works a little differently in every DAW. The important thing is that the effect is at the end of the chain.



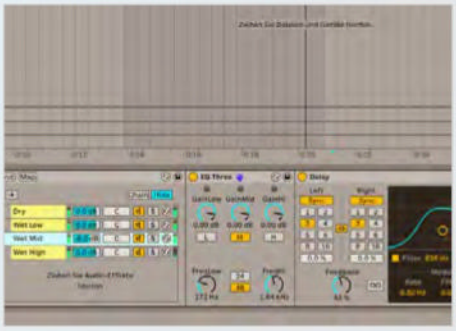
10 Variation & automation

It does rumble a lot, but what keeps techno tracks interesting, in addition to the right sounds, is a good dose of automation. Even a slight increase and decrease in the volume of the rumble track can create tension. And if you automate the effects of delay, reverb and distortion, transitions and drops are easy.



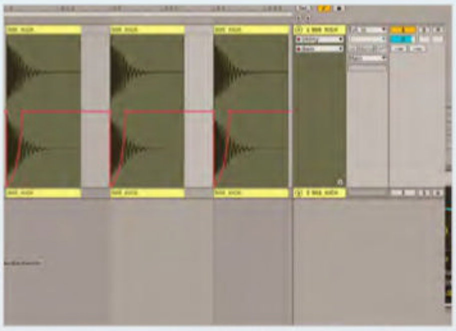
11 Filter sweep

Above all, filter sweeps or filter movements, although in this case more measured, are an essential tool for tension curves. Let the low pass filter open slowly to introduce the rumble as an element. Or use the high pass filter to temporarily remove the bass part of the rumble for tension-filled changes and pauses in your track.



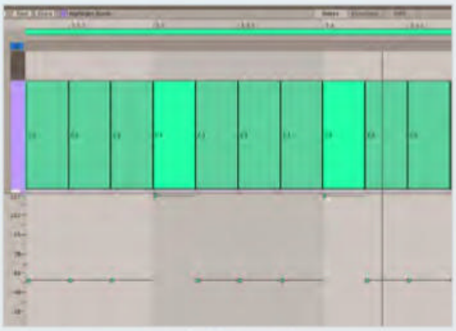
12 Multiband blasts

You can take your rumbles to the next level if you work with multiband setups. As with sidechaining, every DAW has a different way of setting up multiband effects. The idea: different delays, reverbs and distortion effects in several frequency bands. This turns the dark rumbling into a whole thunderstorm!



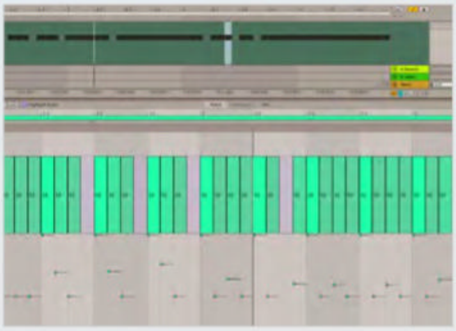
13 Microautomation

If sidechaining isn‘t enough for you, you can delve into the depths of microautomation. Put a gain tool or utility from your DAW at the end of the rumble effects chain. Then automate the volume in the track down whenever the dry kick plays. Depending on the length, this can degenerate into hundreds of small automations.



14 MIDI Control

You get absolute control by programming it as a MIDI clip. For this, the kick must come from a plugin or sampler. Now program a groove for the kick where it plays ALL sixteenth notes of a bar. The trick: using low velocity values on notes 2, 3 and 4 of each quarter note creates the ultimate rumble!



15 Rumble rhythm

Taken to the extreme, you now have the option of creating varying rumble rhythms by deleting certain sixteenth notes, for example. In combination with multiband setups and automation, you can produce endless rumble variations and complete rumble tracks that are entirely to your taste.

Interview with Björn Torwellen

Music against the algorithm

A special on trendy Techno without Sinee founder Björn Torwellen would be unthinkable. Hardly anyone lives and teaches the sound of this genre more motivated and impulsive than the face of the trendy producer forge in Wiehl. But Björn is not only a mentor, he is also a producer himself with a penchant for classic Techno, far away from the hustle and bustle of EDM. In the following conversation, he gave lots of tips for newcomers, on producing and his attitude to social media.

Beat / Hey Björn, let’s start with a classic: What brought you to Techno and producing?

Björn / I was born in 1980 and grew up musically in the 1990s, but initially with Metal, Punk and Hip Hop. At some point I got my hands on “Remanufactured” by Fear Factory, a remix album from 1997. That was the first time I was really into electronic music. One track in particular, where the hi-hat comes in after a break, completely blew me away. I think that‘s when I understood the essence of Techno.

When I was 18, I had a few older friends who introduced me to the sound of Green Velvet, Djax-Up-Beats, Robert Armani, Surgeon and Regis. This music had a lasting impact on me. Producing tracks myself wasn‘t that easy, though. Grooveboxes, synths and the necessary equipment were simply too expensive and I didn‘t have a computer. It wasn‘t until the turn of the millennium that I had regular access to a PC. That‘s when I discovered Rebirth and took my first steps in music production. That was the starting point for everything that came after that.

Beat / What trends do you see in current tracks? Are there particular sounds, techniques or arrangements that are fundamentally different compared to ten years ago?

Björn / There are so many exciting things happening in the Techno scene at the moment. There are so many new directions and trends. Not all of them appeal to me, but I concentrate on what I like and what helps me progress.

Melodic Techno, for example, has reached a level in terms of production that I like to describe as „Ultra HD“. The producers have practically played through this genre. On the other hand, there are deliberately trashy or lo-fi styles, like the current Trance wave. That often sounds like a „fuck-off“ approach, but that‘s exactly the point. The generation wants fun without being too cerebral. It has to bang, that‘s enough. Peak-Time Techno has developed strongly in the direction of EDM in recent years. These rolling basslines and big-room synths, combined with Psytrance elements, have raised the production level extremely.

I personally feel most drawn to Raw and Hypnotic techno, more of a classic sound. It‘s a bit faster today than it was five years ago, but that‘s fine. In 2012 we were at 128 BPM, which was already very slow. Today, what impresses me most is how perfectly the low-end range is in these tracks. The influence of the Eurorack hype is also unmistakable. Many artists who built their modular systems a few years ago can now use them masterfully. And what they learn with them they often transfer to the DAWs. This has made Techno much more organic.

The medium on which the music is listened to is also a big issue. Platforms like TikTok and Spotify have changed the rules of the game. Attention spans have become shorter, suddenly there are 2-minute Techno tracks because that‘s good for the algorithm. I‘m critical of that. Music shouldn‘t just be made for algorithms. I love it when tracks take their time, develop and tell stories. That sometimes gets lost in this fast-moving world.

> » Music shouldn‘t just be made for algorithms. I love when tracks take their time, evolve and tell stories. «

Beat / As a complete beginner, you can sometimes feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of know-how required - from DAW workflow to sound design, arrangement, signal flow and mixing - to create a „good“ or professional-sounding track. Do you have any tips on how to stay motivated?

Björn / The most important thing is to keep having fun and appreciate the process instead of constantly focusing on the end product. Making music is a creative path and you should enjoy it. Just start! Routine is crucial, just like with sport. If you go to the gym regularly, you will see progress. This is exactly how it works with production: stick with it, invest time regularly, even if it is bumpy at first.

But motivation alone is not always enough, discipline is just as important. Instead of turning on Netflix in the evening or scrolling through social media, just put your phone down and go to the studio. Often it is only then that you realize how much fun it is to really concentrate on the music. Progress comes over time, and that provides additional motivation. Make it clear to yourself: it is not about perfection, but about finding your own sound and constantly trying new things.

Beat / ***Producing Techno is one thing. Performing Techno on stage is something completely different. You know both worlds. What advice do you have for curious people who want to bring their tracks to the stage?***

Björn / Playing live is definitely a challenge. My tip: first gain enough experience in the studio. Live performances are not as rewarding as they seem. The audience often doesn‘t care whether you‘re playing live or playing a DJ set, and it usually means more work for the organizer. In addition, you have to invest a huge amount of time to develop a good set. Time that could also be spent on new tracks.

Of course there are artists like Speedy J with Stoor, KiNK or Colin Benders who push live well. But they‘ve been doing it for decades. To get started, I would recommend concentrating on your setup. Think carefully about what works for you on stage, what you can use to represent your sound well and what will help you progress musically.

Above all, the setup should be simple and easy to use. Complexity can quickly become overwhelming, especially during live performances. It should also be portable; nobody wants to arrive with eight Peli cases and then sink into chaos. Start small, develop a setup that feels like an instrument, and get better and better at playing it.

Beat / ***What is the advantage of booking a master class or a similar course at a school like SINEE compared to „I‘ll teach myself everything with YouTube tutorials“?***

Björn / Learning is one of the most important foundations for further development and it helps enormously to have a mentor or to benefit from the experiences of others. We also go to school because the transfer of knowledge by other people is fundamental. Especially in music production, there is so much to discover that you would never come up with on your own.

At SINEE, in addition to our courses, we also offer numerous master classes in which our participants can look directly over the shoulders of established producers. This is not only educational, but also extremely inspiring. Often a small trick or a new approach is enough to further develop your own sound. The workflow can also be improved enormously through such insights. I have often seen young producers get stuck in a completely inefficient workflow and therefore not make any progress. A master class can really be worth its weight in gold.

Another big advantage at SINEE is the community. We stream regularly on YouTube, meet online, exchange ideas and simply have fun. This creates real connections and friendships. Finding like-minded people is incredibly important for honest feedback, motivation and simply to get better together. SINEE offers all of this: learning, exchange and the joy of music.

www.sinee.de | instagram.com/torwellen/

MUSIC TIP

In April the album „10,000 Black Seeds“ was released on Nachtstromschallplatten, in January Björn released an EP on CLR Records.

10 000 BLACK SEEDS

REFILLS FOR ZAMPLER & YOUR MPC

ZAMPLERSOUNDS.COM
BEAT PLATINUM SELECTION
ULTIMATE DRUM
77 LEGENDARY AND MO
ZAMPLER//RX
Enigma
3,2 GB Gregorian choir and synth
ZAMPLER//RX
ETHNIC SYMPHONY
2,6 GB Bässe, Pads & Synths für Chill & House
ZAMPLER//RX
Beat

Hands-on: Subs like Landry & Letyago

Bassline quickies for a fast start

powered by

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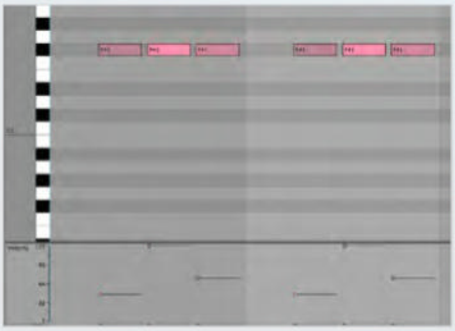
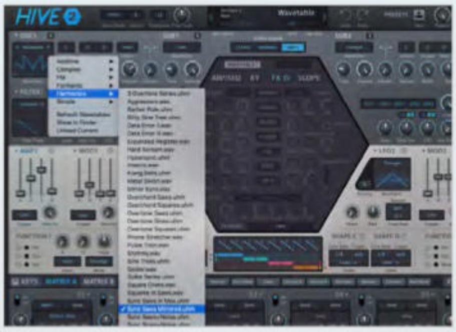
The bass landscape of Techno has changed dramatically. While fat subs and rather undefined rumbling were popular until recently, rattling 16th and offbeat basses are now the hit. As simple as that may sound, it can be difficult to find the right sounds. We'll show you three combinations that will always be a safe bet.

Heavy bass roller

u-he
HIVE 2
HANDS-ON
TECHNO
BASSLINE
QUICKIES





1 Basic pattern

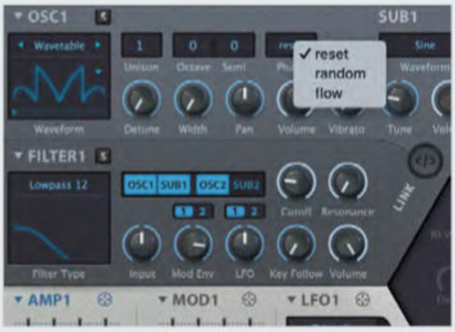
The first combination consists of a bone-dry, hard kick with a rolling bassline. The typical basic pattern for this is quick to build: Draw 16th notes in a MIDI clip and shorten them all by a notch so that they don't directly border each other. We also delete the notes on the kick's playing times to avoid overlapping.

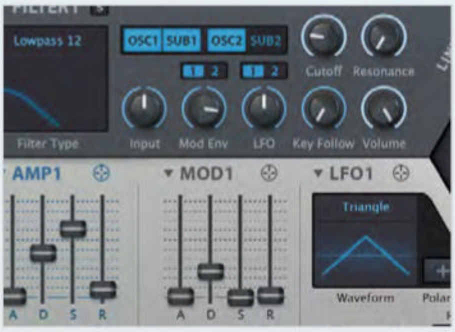
2 Velocity is king!

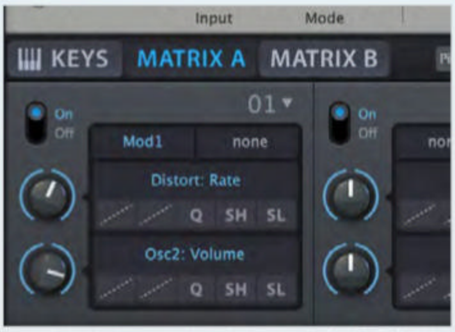
To ensure that the sequence doesn't sound rigid, only the note in the off position gets full velocity, while the others are lowered. This gives you a lot of groove under control! In our example, we use velocities 50, 127 and 75. 50, 75 and 127 also sound cool. You could also use both alternately, which makes the rhythm more relaxed.

3 Sounddesign

That's the pattern for now, now it's time to get into the synth: We select the Hive 2. Right-click in the display with the patch name and select init. Switch on OSC1 and SUB1 in FILTER1 and reduce OSC1 volume to 60 (so that the SUB1 can keep up in terms of volume). We selected the Wavetable Sync Saws Mirrored as the waveform, a sawtooth would also work.


OSC1
Wavetable
Waveform
1
0
0
Unison
Octave
Semi
Detune
Width
Pan
Volume
Vibrato
Tune
✓ reset
random
flow
SUB1
Sine
Waveform
FILTER1
Lowpass 12
Filter Type
OSC1 SUB1 OSC2 SUB2
1 2
1 2
Input
Mod Env
LFO
Key Follow
Volume
Cutoff
Resonance
LINK
AMP1
MOD1
LFO1


FILTER1
Lowpass 12
Filter Type
OSC1 SUB1 OSC2 SUB2
1 2
1 2
Cutoff
Resonance
Input
Mod Env
LFO
Key Follow
Volume
AMP1
MOD1
LFO1
Triangle
Waveform
Polar
A D S R
A D S R


Input
Mode
KEYS
MATRIX A
MATRIX B
On
Off
01
Mod1
none
Distort: Rate
Q SH SL
Osc2: Volume
Q SH SL

4 Phase!

Very important: the PHASE must be set to reset, otherwise the bassline will waft out of the speakers too dynamically, which will cause it to lose punch. Things have to be static here so that the sound is reliably crisp. For the filter, we select lowpass 12 - which also sounds crisper than its 4-pole counterpart - and turn the cutoff to 9 o'clock.

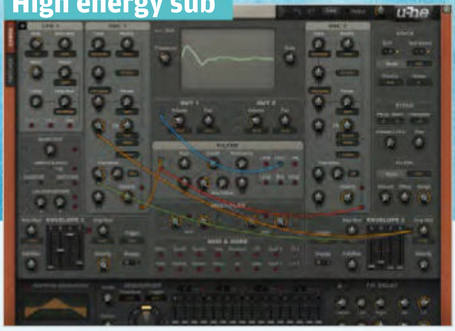
5 Filter envelope

We use Mod Env to control the short opening of the filter. We recommend starting with Mod Env at 9 o'clock and turning all controls down at MOD 1, only Decay remains at around 30%. You should vary these two parameters until you like the sound. Automating Mod Env in the break or to build up is a good way to create tension!

6 More?

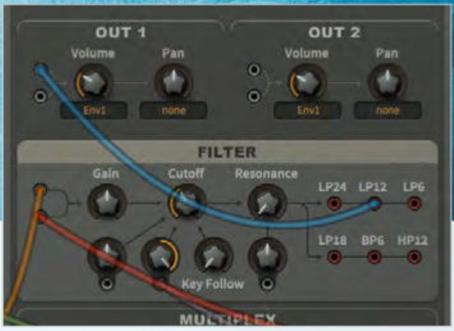
Here are three optional tips: We use the synth engine DIRTY, but maybe another one will suit your track better? If you want more crackling in the sound, switch OSC2 with White Noise to FILTER1 and let OSC2 modulate volume from MOD1. Even more punch? Then switch on the DISTORT FX and let MOD1 modulate the amount.

High energy sub



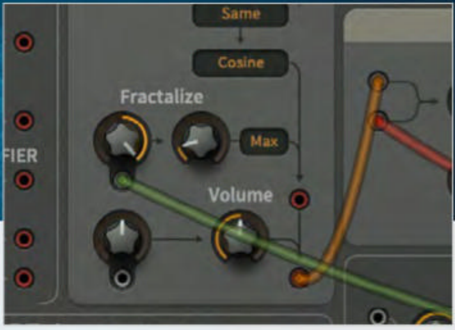
1 Fractalize!

For this bassline we will use Beatzille or alternatively Bazille, because in addition to the fat basic sound, the synth delivers a highly energetic sound, especially with its Fractalize function, which for some reason always makes us think of raves and lasers. We can also take a shortcut by adopting the patterns from the previous workshop.


OUT 1
Volume
Pan
Env1
none
OUT 2
Volume
Pan
Env1
none
FILTER
Gain
Cutoff
Resonance
LP24
LP12
LP6
LP18
BP6
HP12
Key Follow
MULTIPLEX

2 Filter settings

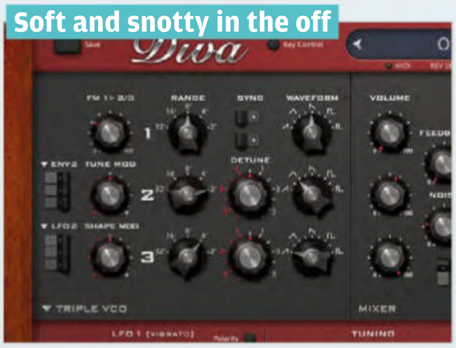
And here too we set ENVELOPE 2 in the same way as MOD1 did before on the Hive: all controls down, just turn up the decay a little. That is the most important basic setting. But let's start from the beginning: connect the OSC 1 output to the FILTER, its LP12 to OUT 1, set the cutoff to 11 o'clock, one of the MOD controls to full blast and connect this control to ENVELOPE 2.


Same
Cosine
Fractalize
Max
Volume
FIER

3 Phase distortion

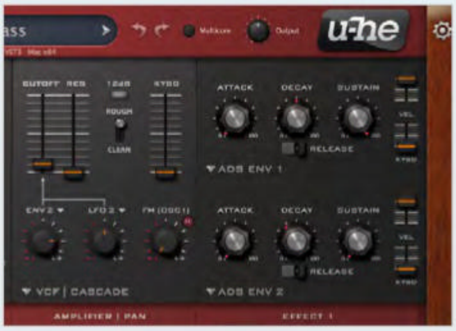
We also connect ENVELOPE 2 to the Mod input of Fractalize and select Max instead of Off. This makes the sound much crisper. Experiment with the Phase Distortion (PD) to fine-tune it. For example, if you want the bass to sound more powerful, select 2Pulse instead of Saw as the waveform. You could also let ENVELOPE 2 modulate PD.

Soft and snotty in the off


Diva
FM 1> 2/3
RANGE
SYNC
WAVEFORM
VOLUME
ENV2
TUNE MOD
DETUNE
LFO2
SHAPE MOD
TRIPLE VCO
MIXER
LFO 1 (VIBRATO)
TUNING

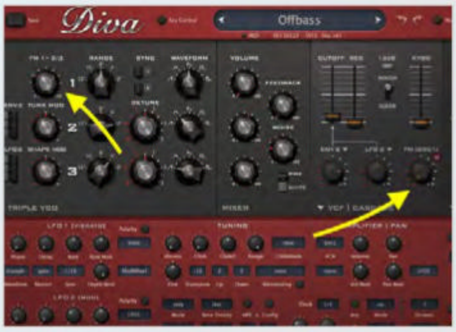
1 Simple start

The third bass in the group will be a soft, variable sound that you can make much more complex and dirtier with just one move. This time we'll use the Diva with the init preset (right-click on the patch name) and mix the three oscillators and noise at 0%, 55%, 100% and 25%. We'll set their RANGE to 8', 2' and 4'.


u-he
CUTOFF
RES
ATTACK
DECAY
SUSTAIN
RELEASE
ADS ENV 1
ENV 2
LFO 2
FM (OSC1)
VCF | CASCADE
ADS ENV 2
AMPLIFIER | PAN
EFFECT 1

2 Filter again

We choose sawtooth, triangle and reverse sawtooth as waveforms. Switch to the CASCADE module for the filter and lower the CUTOFF to about 55. To do this, we again use ENV 2 with a short DECAY to open it. We also turn up the VEL on both envelopes so that the velocity influences the volume and filter.


Diva
Offbass
1
2
3
TRIPLE VCO
MIXER

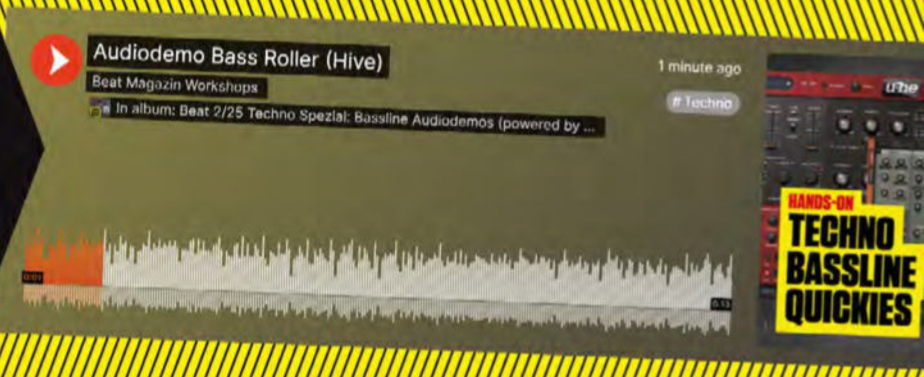
3 Now it gets rough

So far everything sounds unspectacular. However, if you turn FM(OSC1) on the filter to the left, a pleasant dirtiness comes into the sound. It gets really heavy and powerful if you turn up FM 1>2/3 on the first oscillator. Here we thought the sound was great with the control at 10 o'clock, but the final setting depends on your context.

SOUNDCLOUD

u-he

LISTEN TO AUDIO DEMOS ON SOUNDCLOUD



Audiodemo Bass Roller (Hive)

Beat Magazin Workshops

In album: Beat 2/25 Techno Spezial: Bassline Audiodemos (powered by ...

1 minute ago

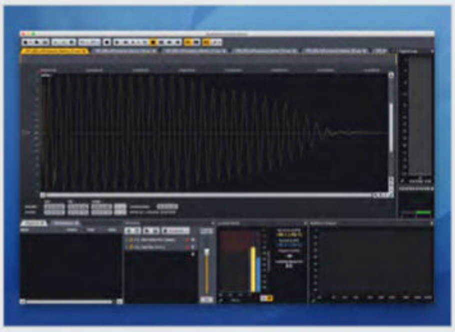
Techno

0:01
0:33
HANDS-ON
TECHNO BASSLINE QUICKIES

Hands-on: Drum sounddesign

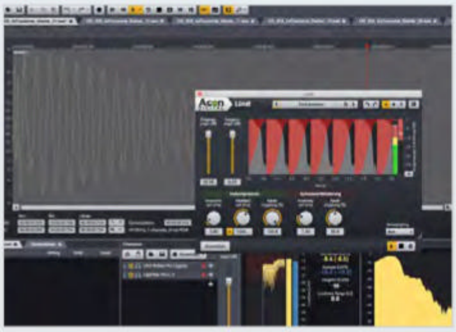
This way even the 909 sounds cool again

Having cool drums is generally not a mistake. But it's even better if they sound unique, right? Yes, we're going to show you a technique that lets you create particularly distinctive sounds and, above all, make existing kits completely different (and more interesting) with just a few clicks. Even a worn-out 909 sounds like new this way!



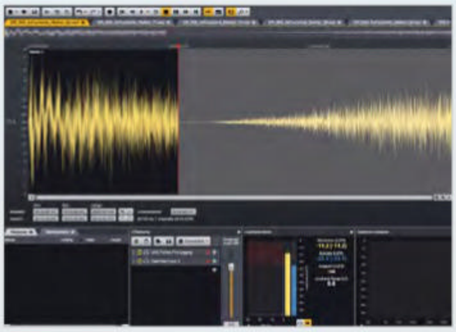
1 Load kit

The technique is quickly explained: we take a drum kit and bend all the sounds in the audio editor. Sounds trivial (and it is), but the result is awesome! Grab the 909 analogue kit from the workshop data, duplicate the folder and load all 12 samples into your editor. If you don't have one, **Ocean Audio** is also included.



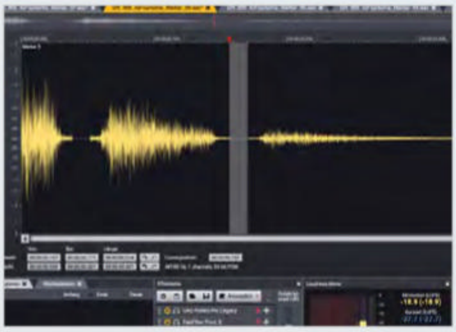
2 Freestyle!

From now on we work freestyle: each sample is bent differently. You don't have to follow our order here, but you can get inspired. Let's start with the kick: we transpose it down by two semitones with the harmonizer of our editor Acoustica and then add a limiter with input gain at maximum.



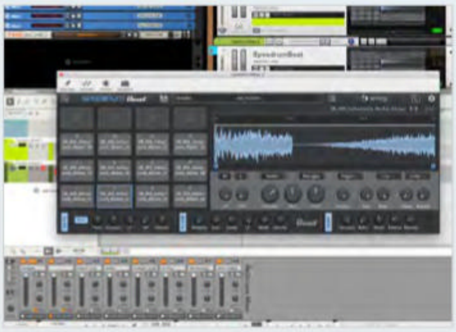
3 Even backwards?

This makes it sound much fatter. For the snare, we select the part after about the first third and play it backwards. We stretch the rimshot sample three times to 400% length via timestretch, which gives us a tonal sound. For the open hi-hat, we add a few milliseconds of silence at two points in the sample.



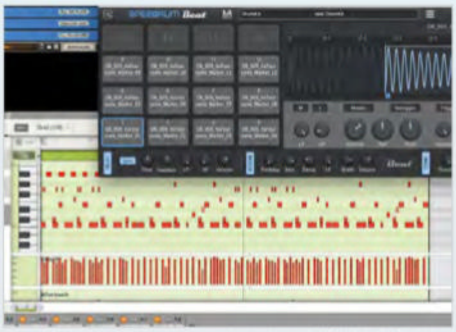
4 Fades against crackles

Set short fades so that the cuts don't produce any crackles. We transpose the high tom sound (Sample 05) down a whole octave, creating a subtle bass. The middle tom is again transposed up an octave, and then duplicates of three and seven semitones are added with the harmonizer, turning it into a chord.



5 Import samples

Look for a different alienation technique for each sample. Once all sounds have been processed, switch to your DAW and load your favorite drum sampler onto a fresh track and the new samples into it. With our Speedrum, you can import all twelve samples in one go using drag & drop. And now it's time to start creating beats.



6 Fine tuning

You'll notice that some sounds may be too harsh or just don't fit the context. This is where Speedrum's on-board tools can help. How about reverb on the rimshot? A high-pass filter on the kick to tame the heavy sub? Don't be afraid of heavy intervention, fresh sounds await you at the end!

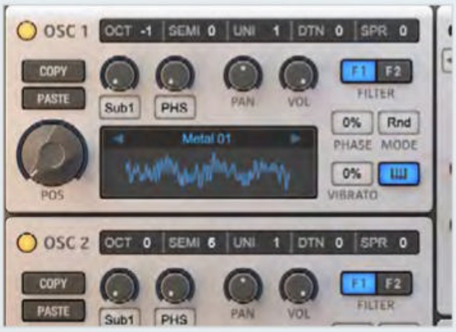
Hands-on: Pure hypnosis

Hypnotic Techno chord loops

Deep Techno is a fine thing. It‘s melodic, too, but unlike other styles it‘s usually very disharmonic, which makes it all the more hypnotic. This is created by the interplay of short, permanently repeating loops of complex chords. But not every loop is suitable for this. In this workshop, you‘ll find instructions on how to create endless Techno hooks.

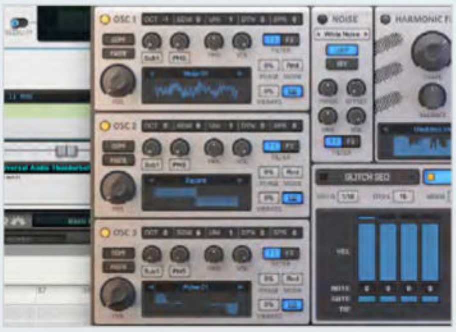
Project info

Material: Reason 9 and up
Time required: About 45 minutes
Content: Use disharmonic chords as the basis for Techno sequences and sort out the best loops.
Difficulty: Advanced



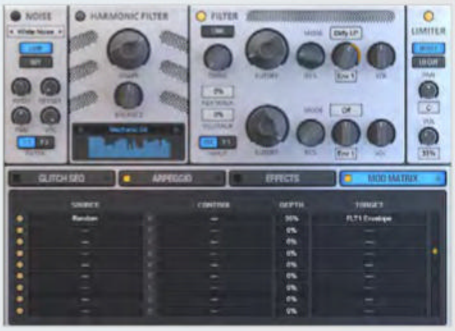
1 Define chords

We build a kind of „chord machine“ that spits out endless potential Techno loops. As a basis, we use our Thorn BEAT with three oscillators. The waveforms are arbitrary, you can let off steam here later. But tuning is important: **OSC 1** may rumble low down with **OCT -1**, while **OSC 2** and **OSC 3** are responsible for a **chord**.



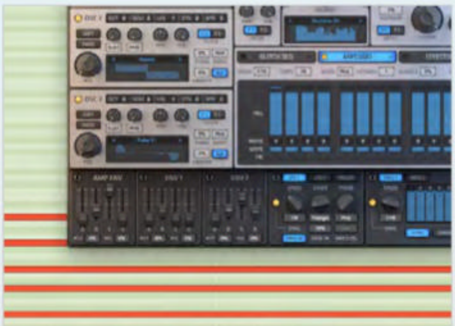
2 Modulate filter

Here, we recommend combinations like **SEMI 6 + SEMI 9** or **3 + 10** or **4 + 8**, away from the typical harmonic chords with three and seven or four and seven semitones. To make the sound not mechanical, we use a filter with the **Dirty LP MODE**, turn **CUTOFF** almost completely off and **RESonance** up a little bit.



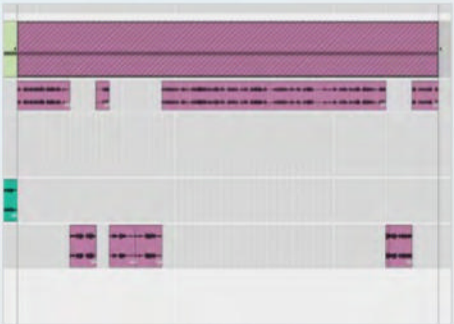
3 Random & Arpeggio

In the **MOD MATRIX**, we connect **Random** to **35%** with **FLT1 Envelope**. This way, the chords will be slightly different each time they are triggered. If you play different notes now, it still doesn‘t rock, so you need a sequence. Activate the **ARPEGGIO** with the **Random MODE** and record as many held notes as you like over **16 or 32** bars.



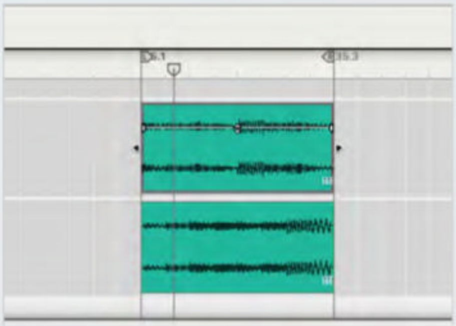
4 Audio to clip

Thanks to random notes and filter modulation, new patterns are constantly being created. However, they are still very chaotic, so one last step is missing: turn off Delay or Reverb, bounce the clip to audio, and set the loop playback to half a bar. Whole bars can also do it, but for us the half bars worked better.



5 Sort out

Load a long reverb on the track and work through the audio file bit by bit to find the best loops. This may sound like a lot of work, but it‘s done in a minute and the result is several Techno sequences of the finest kind. And it gets even better: copy two different loops onto one audio track each.



6 More stereo?

Then pan one to the left, the other to the right. Depending on the sequence, one may turn out a bit louder than the other, in which case, adjust slightly. That‘s how you get insanely wide loops. Once you‘re through with a clip, change the waveforms in the Thorn. We found the best sounds with the wavetables away from the standards.

Interview with The Jeyênne

From Rave to school

The Jeyênne is no stranger, especially to older people. The Berlin resident made a name for himself in the 90s with his Techno and Rave releases. And this name still exists in the scene today and is relevant. In addition to producing and his own label, he founded the EMS - Electronic Music School with two locations in Germany. More than enough material for many questions... we asked him eight of them...

Beat / Hey Jey, great to have you here! In keeping with your style, we won‘t waste any time chatting, but will get straight to the point: making music, managing a label and running a school for producers and DJs - how do you manage all of that?

The Jeyênne / Oh, right at the start, the master question! Without my passion for music, a pinch of discipline and the help of organizational tools to structure my tasks, none of this would be possible. Almost as important to me, however, is a suitable balance such as sport and travel to clear my head. Most of my days start with a fresh cup of coffee and processing emails and social media activities. Since I am most creative in the evenings and have the most peace and quiet, I devote myself to music or other creative projects. I am currently working on my new XPQ-21 album, which will be released in spring 2025. But there are also days when I just concentrate on my private life and go on tours into the countryside on my Vespa.

Beat / I still have recordings at home of the first Mayday events, which you also attended. How do you perceive current raves in comparison to those from back then? What has changed?

The Jeyênne / Musically, little has changed: Techno is still lived and experienced as it used to be - not just in Berlin, but worldwide. The rhythm of the style changes has also remained the same: every 1.5 years a style changes, the BPMs increase or the sound gets harder. There is one development that I view critically: social networks are increasingly filled with DJs whose focus is less on the music and more on quick success and fame. Often there is a lack of real passion and the willingness to explore new musical paths and enrich the scene in the long term. Instead, the outward appearance is maintained by buying likes in order to get gigs - a practice that raises questions. But as is so often the case, sooner or later the wheat will be separated from the chaff and new, talented artists will breathe new life into the scene. That is at least the bright spot. Another phenomenon that I don‘t want to leave unmentioned is the constant „twitching of the mobile phone“: Many people seem to be more concerned with filming than dancing. Perhaps we need new terms for this, such as „mobile clubbing“, „selfie rave“ or „social club mining“. The list could go on and on, but you can see that partying has changed - and not always for the better.

Beat / Where do you see the biggest (and most positive) developments in Techno today?

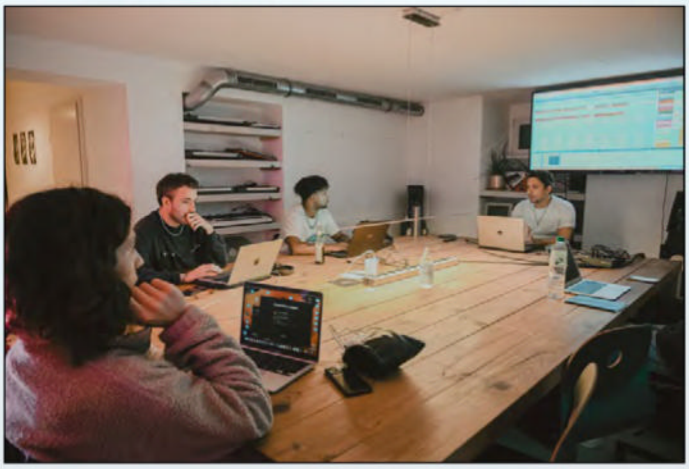
The Jeyênne / The sound has definitely improved, the recordings are much more sophisticated, and the sound design seems much more mature. In the past, we had to work much longer and more intensively on a sound to create something cool or unique. Today, thanks to more intelligent DAWs and an enormous selection of sounds and plugins, this is much quicker and easier. Even working with hardware is easier today, as many things can be stored digitally faster and more easily. In contrast, little has changed in modular synthesis - and that‘s a good thing (except that the modules have become extremely expensive). In the end, the right mixture makes the difference.

Photos: yaanberlin

> » Many people seem to be concerned with filming than dancing. Perhaps we need new terms for this, such as „mobile clubbing“, „selfie rave“ or „social club mining“. «

Beat / Where do you get the inspiration for new tracks and how do you start?

The Jeyênne / I like to produce spontaneously, without thinking too much



about it beforehand - straight out of nothing. I do have effects and plugins that I often and happily use, but my approach is constantly changing. I force myself to start differently every time - no template, no fixed pattern. However, once an idea has been formed and the creative phase is complete, it's all about the technique. This accounts for perhaps 80% of the work and follows a set workflow that almost always stays the same. I get my inspiration from life: listening to music, traveling and everything that happens around me - I soak it up like a sponge. Then I sit down at my hardware, scroll through samples and drums and just go with the flow. Sometimes something comes out of it, sometimes not - it all depends on the day.

*Beat / **Do you use certain synths and tools regularly? If so, which ones and for what?***

The Jeyênne / My main DAW is Ableton - mainly because of its intuitive operation. For basslines I sometimes use the Moog Sub37, which I record as audio via a UAD or sometimes Focusrite if I need to be quick. Fabfilter are an integral part of my mixdown, and the new Twin 3 synth inspires me with its great sound and versatile editing options. An absolute must-have for me is the Valhalla Room plugin - in my opinion one of the best effects for reverb and echo. For special FX I often use Soundtoys or the Native Instruments Reaktor. Butch Vig Drums is one of my favorites when it comes to drums. In addition, some SSL plugins round off my sound perfectly.

*Beat / **Do you also have moments when everything is too much for you and you would like to press the stop button? How do you deal with it, how do you maneuver yourself out of it?***

The Jeyênne / Yes, there were moments like that, probably all of us have them even if nobody talks about them. During the COVID pandemic in particular, I reached my limits. I had to deal with the breakup with my girlfriend at the time and at the same time deal with the Corona situation. In order to save EMS, I had to fire the entire team and suddenly found myself alone. There were days when I was completely lost and would have liked to give up everything. At some point in October 2021, I asked myself the crucial question: „You have two options now: Either you bury your head in the sand and give up, or you fight and pull yourself out again.“ I chose the latter. We survived Corona and emerged from the pandemic stronger because I learned things during this time that were previously unthinkable. I actually wanted to finish the XPQ-21 album during this phase, but circumstances did not allow it. Numerous decisions had to be made, which unfortunately led to delays.

*Beat / **And in keeping with that: What has changed in your music?***

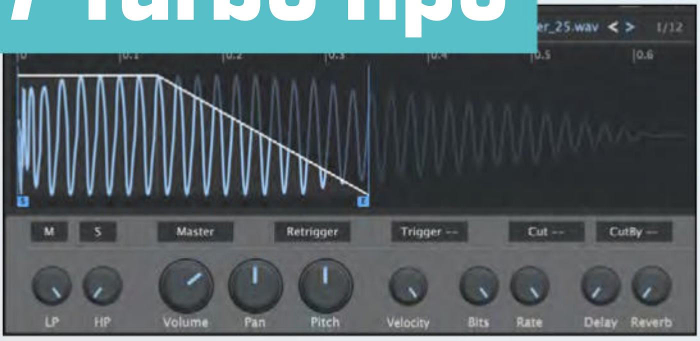
The Jeyênne / The exchange with my students and lecturers gives me access to a huge source of knowledge that has significantly improved my workflow, sound design and mixdown. I also constantly get to know which trends and genres are currently popular and evolving - this has a direct influence on the tracks I produce.

*Beat / **Our readers know EMS from your monthly “Song Starter” series, but why don’t you tell us briefly what makes your school special and who should take a closer look?***

The Jeyênne / EMS does not see itself as a traditional school, but rather as a kind of community in which people make music together - both offline and online. We can rightly say that we are an authentic school for electronic music. We don‘t look down on anyone or think we know better. Our coaching takes place on an equal footing, everyone is taken seriously, and we take the time needed for each individual. The producer and DJ courses have been led for 15 years by experienced professionals who either produce for the music industry or perform as DJs around the world. We are continuously developing the course content, keeping it up to date and adapting it to current styles in order to always impart contemporary knowledge. We also offer internal groups in which feedback on the current status of productions can be given at any time. There is also free tutoring once a month and the opportunity to catch up on missed course units free of charge. We are constantly working on tutorials, which we initially offer internally and free of charge to our students. With our offline and online courses, we cover all modern learning areas without becoming so large that the students are just a number. Our courses are deliberately manageable so that every student receives real added value and is not sitting in a class with 30 people. Anyone who visits our school in Berlin or Cologne will immediately feel the family atmosphere that invites relaxed learning and creative exchange. If you want to produce contemporary, club-friendly music and play as a club DJ, there is no way around EMS.

www.em-school.com
instagram.com/electronicmusicschool/
www.instagram.com/thejeyenne/

For more pressure in your drums:
7 Turbo tips


er_25.wav
1/12
M
S
Master
Retrigger
Trigger --
Cut --
CutBy --
LP
HP
Volume
Pan
Pitch
Velocity
Bits
Rate
Delay
Reverb

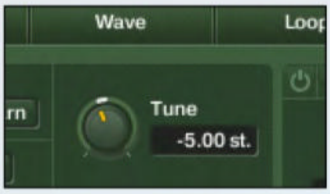
1 Tighter drums with less decay

Especially kicks and toms can overload a mix with their powerful low end. In this case, or if the bass is pushed away too long by sidechain via kick, the sound is usually simply too long. The solution is easy: reduce sustain and release to zero and then turn down the decay until the kick no longer takes up all the space.

2 More punch via pitch envelope

Kick too soft or snare too weak? Then an envelope can help if it modulates the pitch of the sample. To do this, set all controls to zero, only turn up the decay a little (20 to 30 ms is usually enough) and then set the intensity of the envelope to pitch to 50% or higher. It will crackle a lot more! But note: the longer the decay and the higher the intensity, the shorter the sample will be.

3 Impact through pitching down

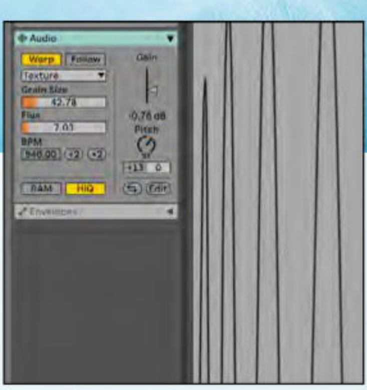

Wave
Loop
Tune
-5.00 st.

With the other way around - pitching down - you can give samples a lot more fullness, punch and bounce. Transients can suffer a bit and punch can be lost, so it‘s important to weigh what suits the overall beat better.

4 More presence with the Bitcrusher

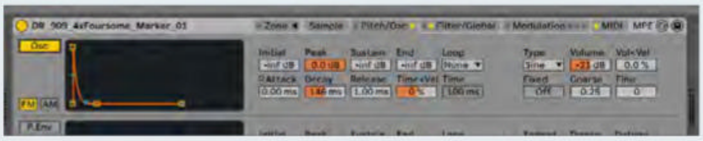
krush
DECIMORT
DAC

Drum legends like the E-mu SP-1200 or Akai‘s earlier MPC and sampler series are often associated with „that very special“ groove and sound. Often both were born out of the need to save expensive memory, because a sample with 11 kHz at 8 bit needs less space than one with 44.1 kHz and 24 bit. This sound can be easily created with Bitcrushers, but not everyone sounds as crisp as the sampler legends. Our tips: triktik Krush (you can find it in the magazine downloads), waveTracing SP 950 [1], d16 Decimort [2] and TAL-DAC [3] ensure official vintage sound!


Audio
Warp
Follow
Texture
Grain Size
42.78
Flux
7.03
BPM
140.00
:2
*2
Gain
0.76 dB
Pitch
RAM
HiQ
Edit
Envelopes

5 New sounds thanks to Ableton‘s Warp mode

When it comes to using loops, Ableton Live is way ahead, not least because of its excellent time-stretching algorithms. And they can do more than just keep loops running smoothly. For example, alienate drums and create completely new sounds. Load a kick or snare on an audio track, activate Warp and select Texture mode. Press the 2x button several times to double the length of the sample and then experiment with Grain Size and Flux. Once you have a cool sound, copy the clip and consolidate it to make a new sample.

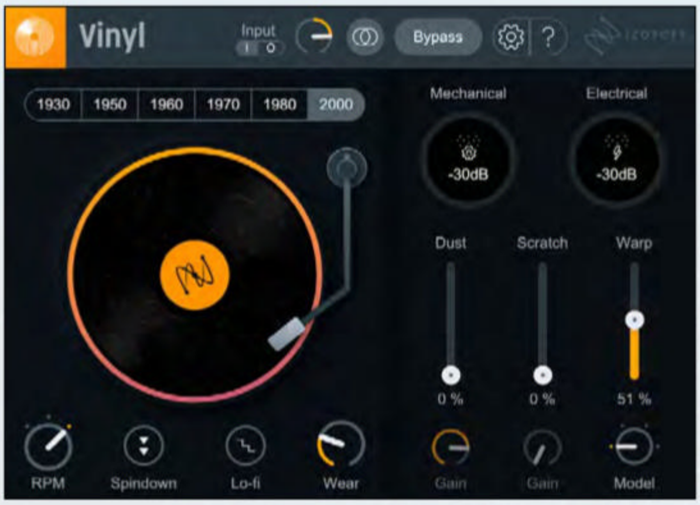

Osc
Initial
Peak
Sustain
End
Loop
Attack
Decay
Release
Time<Vel
Time
Type
Volume
Vol<Vel
Fixed
Coarse
Fine
FM
AM

6 Crisp kicks with FM synthesis

And a second tip especially for Ableton Live and its sampler, because this is the only one of its kind that we know of that can apply FM synthesis to samples. Load a drum sound and activate the FM Osc(illator) in the „Pitch/Osc“ tab. Drive volume up to about -21 dB to hear an effect. To turn the brutal saw sound into a crisp click, reduce Decay to 140 ms. Now adjust Volume, Coarse and Decay to find the best setting for the sound.

7 Artifacts for more weight

A good reason why people still sample from vinyl today is its special round and warm sound, and especially the distinctive crackle. It‘s handy that you can have this even without a turntable: just load the freeware Vinyl from iZotope [4] onto your drum track and adjust the sound to your taste. Tip: let the effect be pushed away from the kick by sidechain compression and fade it back in with a long release of 300ms or more for an even more intense sound.


Vinyl
Input
Bypass
1930
1950
1960
1970
1980
2000
Mechanical
Electrical
-30dB
-30dB
Dust
Scratch
Warp
0 %
0 %
51 %
RPM
Spindown
Lo-fi
Wear
Gain
Gain
Model

[1] www.wavetracing.com; [2] www.d16.pl; [3] www.tal-audio.com; [4] www.izotope.com

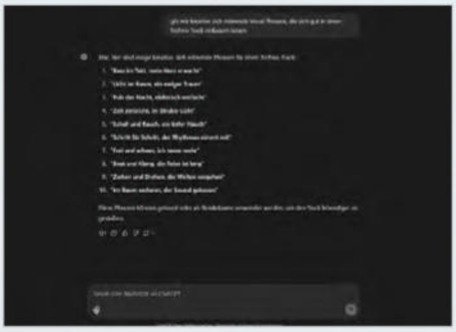
Hands-on: Vox for Techno

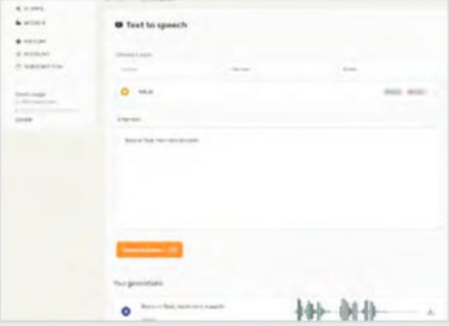
Where can I get unique vocals?

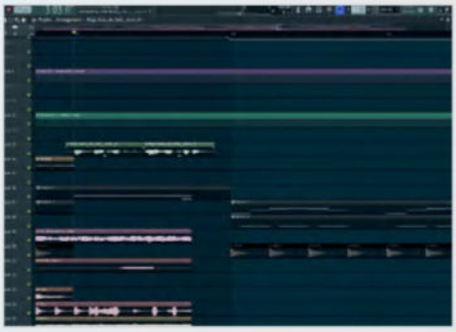
Used either in a rhythmic loop or as a gap filler before the drop, vocals can be the cherry on the cake to complete the track. But if you don't want to use the same samples from popular libraries as many others, you can easily create them yourself with artificial intelligence and a little mixing.

Project info

Material: DAW, Uberduck or other AI vocal service
Time required: 20 minutes
Content: Create your own unique Techno vocals
Difficulty: Medium







1 Songwriting for Techno

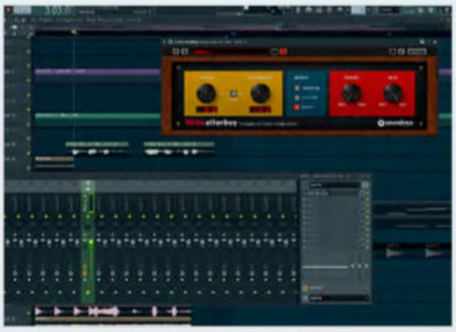
The well-known all-rounder AI ChatGPT can be used to inspire suitable phrases. Get inspired and keep in mind that even pretty blunt phrases can work, as Maddix showed in his track "Tonight" with the simple line: "Give me another half and tonight will be awesome."

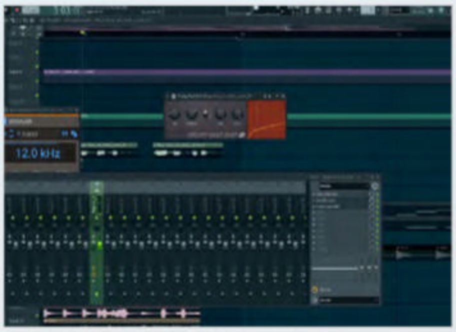
2 Let AI speak!

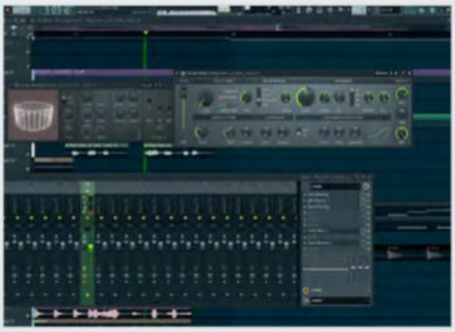
Once you have found the phrase that matches the track you want to work with, use an online AI that can generate text to speech in the language of the phrase. ubderduck.ai offers a wide selection of free languages and voices, while there are also many other alternatives such as speechify.com, naturalreaders.com and ttsmp3.com.

3 Stretching

As you might expect, it is also essential for the vocals to play in the rhythm of the track. So don't be afraid to activate the metronome and cut and stretch the vocals until they fit perfectly into the rhythm. Artifacts in the voice that occur when stretching are actually desired in most cases.







4 Like a Robot

The change in the sound of the voice caused by stretching should now be intensified even further. To do this, change the pitch of the vocals, using the fundamental note of the song or its fifth. Also experiment with changes to the formant of the voice, using plugins such as Little Alterboy from Soundtoys or the free alternative MautoPitch.

5 Distort!

In most cases, distortion goes very well with the typical hard, artificial Techno sound. Use different distortion effects, such as Bitcrush, to color the sound of the vocals. You can boldly use all the functions of the plug-ins until the overtones created by the distortion sound right with the rest of the song.

6 Dimension

To add a certain depth to the mix, add plenty of reverb and delay to the vocals. Use large rooms and a long reverb time for the reverb, season it with a very fast ping pong delay with little feedback for the stereo width, and voila, your self-made vocal sample for your next Techno track is ready.

Step by step: An arrangement for Melodic Techno

Techno is for dancing. So it's no wonder that the arrangements are straight forward and give the audience rousing highs and lows on the floor.

1 | Intro

Kick, hi-Hat, clap

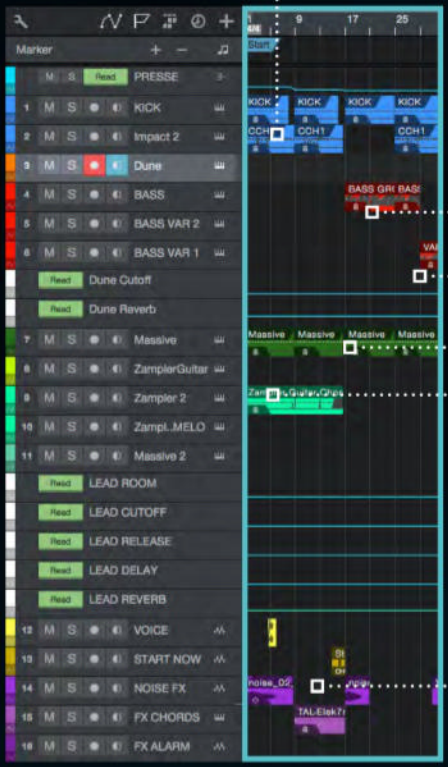
Without further ado, the classic Techno track starts with kick, open hi-hat and clap to make life easier for the DJ. The complete beat is sent to a bus track (here: PRESS). Its high-pass filter is automated to around 200 Hz for the first eight bars, and to 45 Hz for the following eight bars.

Why? / The reduced intro offers numerous entry points for the DJ mix. Due to the filter automation, the beat is present and audible, but saves the full force for the part that follows. The eighth bar remains without a kick.

Off chords

The track is almost entirely carried by chords that are placed off-beat and doubled (Massive and Zampler 2). The Massive is tuned an octave down and is panned hard to the left and right synchronous to the beat. The notes on both tracks are kept very short (about 1/16). But in the bars 15 and 16 the notes of the Zampler track get longer and longer.

Why? / The chords create a melodic touch on the one hand and push forward on the other. The stereo panning of the Massive Chords increases the stereo width. The longer notes towards the end of the section create a certain drama.



Bass & variation

After eight bars of minimal instrumentation, the rest of the drums kick in again. After four more bars the bassline plays a variation.

Why? / The drums that set in push the track further and thanks to the bass variation there's less risk of boring the listener with the same patterns over and over again.

Kick and bass

From bar 17 on, our track takes off and with the bass one of the most important elements is added.

Why? / The applied „maximum to minimum" principle is classic for drops: space and width are filled with reverb automation, stereo elements or risers, while the bass range remains empty. When the beat and bass start, the situation is suddenly reversed: Almost all elements disappear, kick and bass play solo. The sudden change from a large stereo width to an almost monaural mix intensifies the effect.

Effects

Every 16 bars we add a noise downer (NOISE FX), but alternately as a long and short version. On the first of measures of the ninth and thirteenth bar we place short chord sound (FX CHORDS) with a long, large reverb.

Why? / Just the beat alone is a bit one-dimensional, but too many elements at the beginning take away the opportunity to build tension in the rest of the arrangement. Effects are therefore a great way to keep the listener entertained and at the same time bring in stereo width and spatial sound.

Chords

In our arrangement, one of the chord tracks is retained. You can also take this to the extreme and mute the track so that the stereo width previously created turns completely mono.

Why? / We want to maintain the flow that has been created because the listener has just gotten used to the chords.

2 | 1st main part

Second bassline

From bar 33 another bassline fades in (Dune), which extends the previous one.

Why? / The listener has finally fallen into the track and the DJ should have completed the transition. So it's time to work towards the first break with further increases.

Guitar chords and hookline

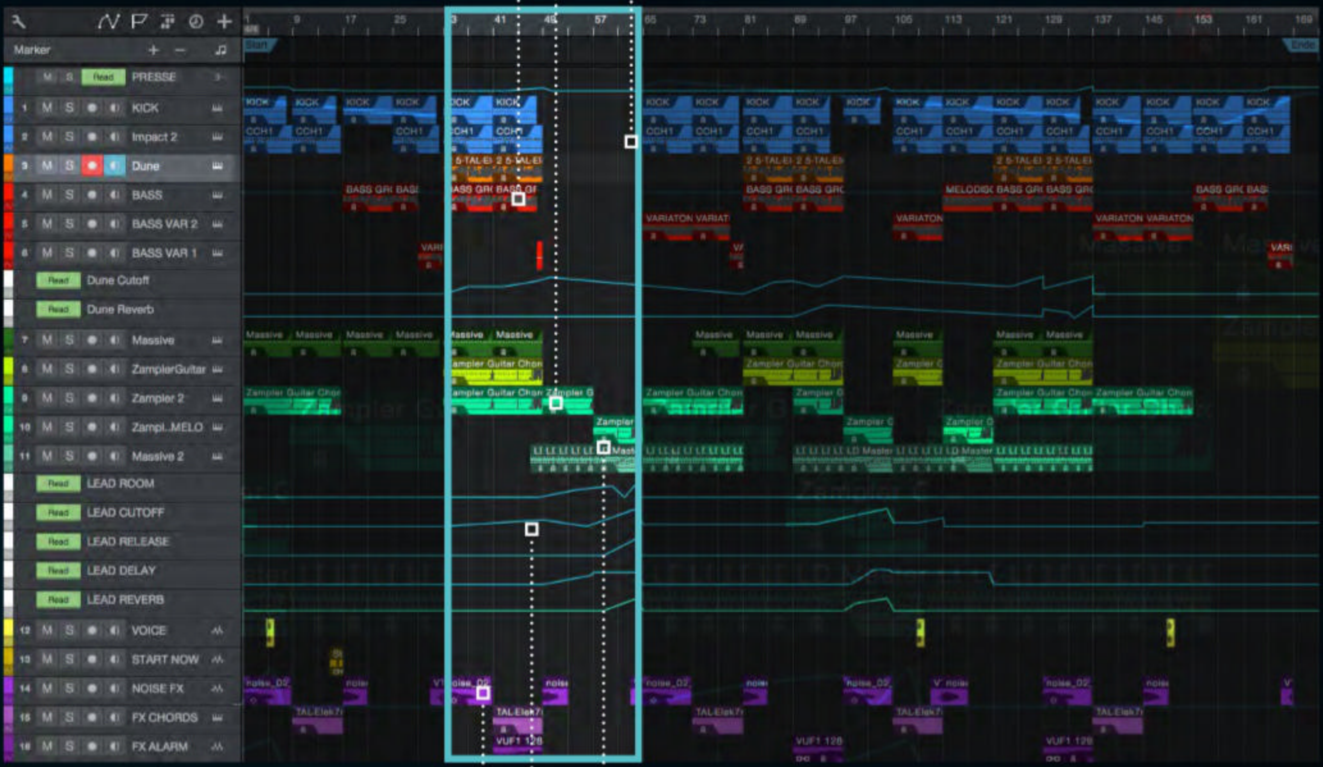
Parallel to the second bassline, the Zampler chords start again and are supported by a third track (ZamplerGuitar), which plays the same off-pattern. At the end of the section, the actual hookline is faded in, but as a loop of its first two bars.

Why? / The new off-track subtly condenses the overall the overall mix with a new sound. The loop of the hookline announces the new melodic component, since the track runs towards the break. This makes the transition less abrupt.

Break

Beat and bass stop completely in the break.

Why? / The listener/dancer has his first pause and can fully concentrate on the following melodies.


Marker
PRESSE
KICK
Impact 2
Dune
BASS
BASS VAR 2
BASS VAR 1
Dune Cutoff
Dune Reverb
Massive
ZamplerGuitar
Zampler 2
Zampl..MELO
Massive 2
LEAD ROOM
LEAD CUTOFF
LEAD RELEASE
LEAD DELAY
LEAD REVERB
VOICE
START NOW
NOISE FX
FX CHORDS
FX ALARM

Effects

As in the intro, noise and FX chords are placed here again, plus a riser over eight bars.

Why? / Noise and chords provide width and fullness again, while the riser announces a major turn (the break) in the track.

Automations

Over the 16 bars of the break, the hookline's reverb, filter, release and delay are continuously increased and then turned back to their original state before the following beat.

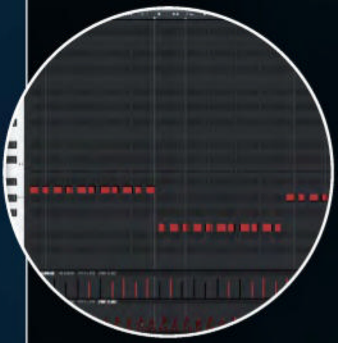
Why? / True to the above-mentioned "maximum to minimum" principle, we create great tension before the beat hits again with full force.

Chords and hookline

The hookline is looped over eight bars and then played in full. Since it changes pitch every few bars, the accompanying chords are also transposed accordingly.

Why? / Playing it as a short loop creates tension and gives the listener a chance to adjust to the new sound before it is heard with the full melody.

3 | 2nd main part

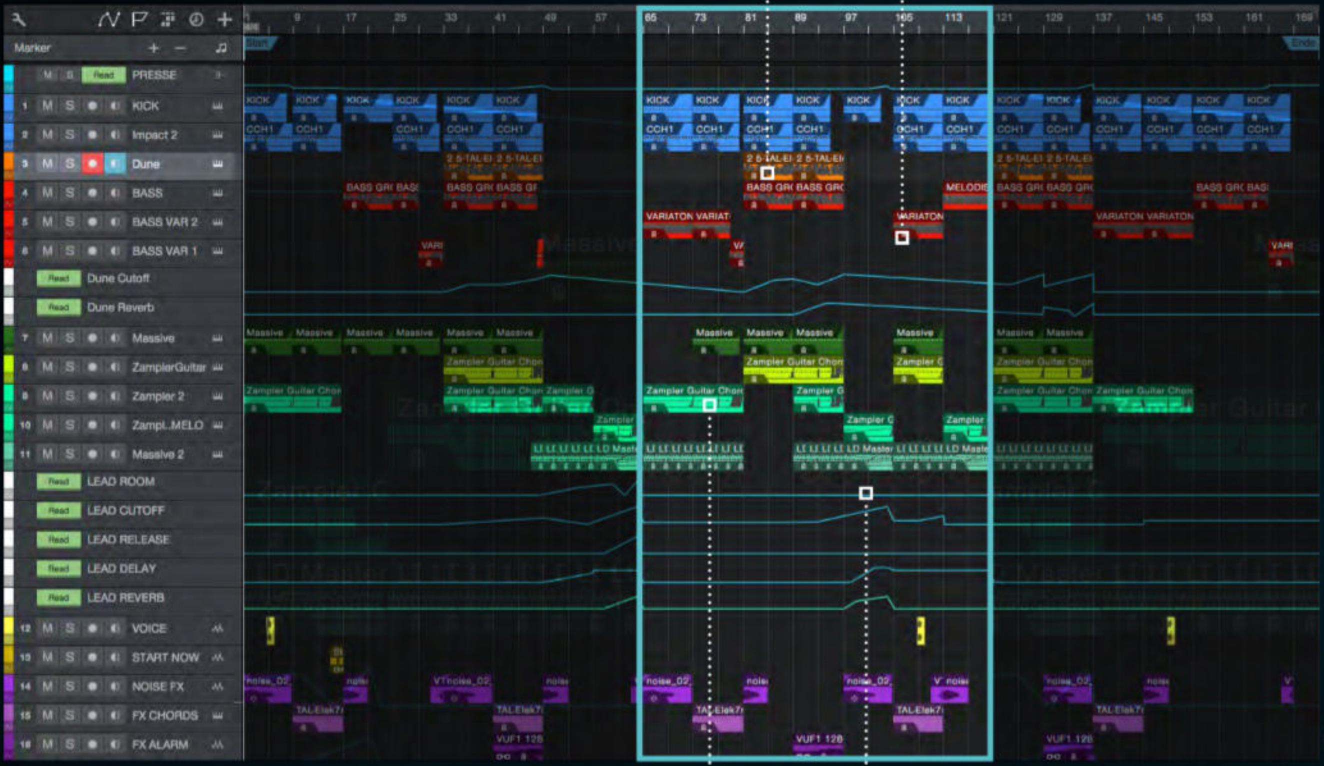


Beat and bass

After the break, beat and bass start again, but the latter with a varied pattern. After 16 bars the bass changes to the usual pattern, supported by the second bassline.
Why? / The new variation of the bassline does not simply let the track continue as already heard after the intro, but provides new tension and entertainment.

Beat and bass variations

For eight bars, the kick continues to play alone without drums and bass, while the hookline starts again with full melody. The automations are also activated in a reduced form.
Why? / The minimal instrumentation creates a lot of space for the hookline, but the beat doesn‘t stop completely. So the audience can keep dancing. At the same time, the automations announce a transition again.


Marker
PRESSE
KICK
Impact 2
Dune
BASS
BASS VAR 2
BASS VAR 1
Dune Cutoff
Dune Reverb
Massive
ZamplerGuitar
Zampler 2
Zampl. MELO
Massive 2
LEAD ROOM
LEAD CUTOFF
LEAD RELEASE
LEAD DELAY
LEAD REVERB
VOICE
START NOW
NOISE FX
FX CHORDS
FX ALARM

Hookline und Chords

The hookline (Massive 2) continues as a loop, with the filter closed. The chords return to the usual pattern without pitch changes. After 16 bars also the Zampler Guitar track starts again.
Why? / With too much melody the track would drift in the wrong direction, so we‘re going back to monotony for the time being so that the listener can let the pitch change sink in.

Full beat, full melody

Beat, bass and chords start again, while the hookline continues as a loop. The bassline plays a variation as before. After only eight bars this time, the hookline becomes melodic again, and so does the bassline for the first and only time.
Why? / We are heading towards the climax, so gradually all the existing tracks kick in. The peak is the full melodic hookline to the full beat, including melodic bassline.

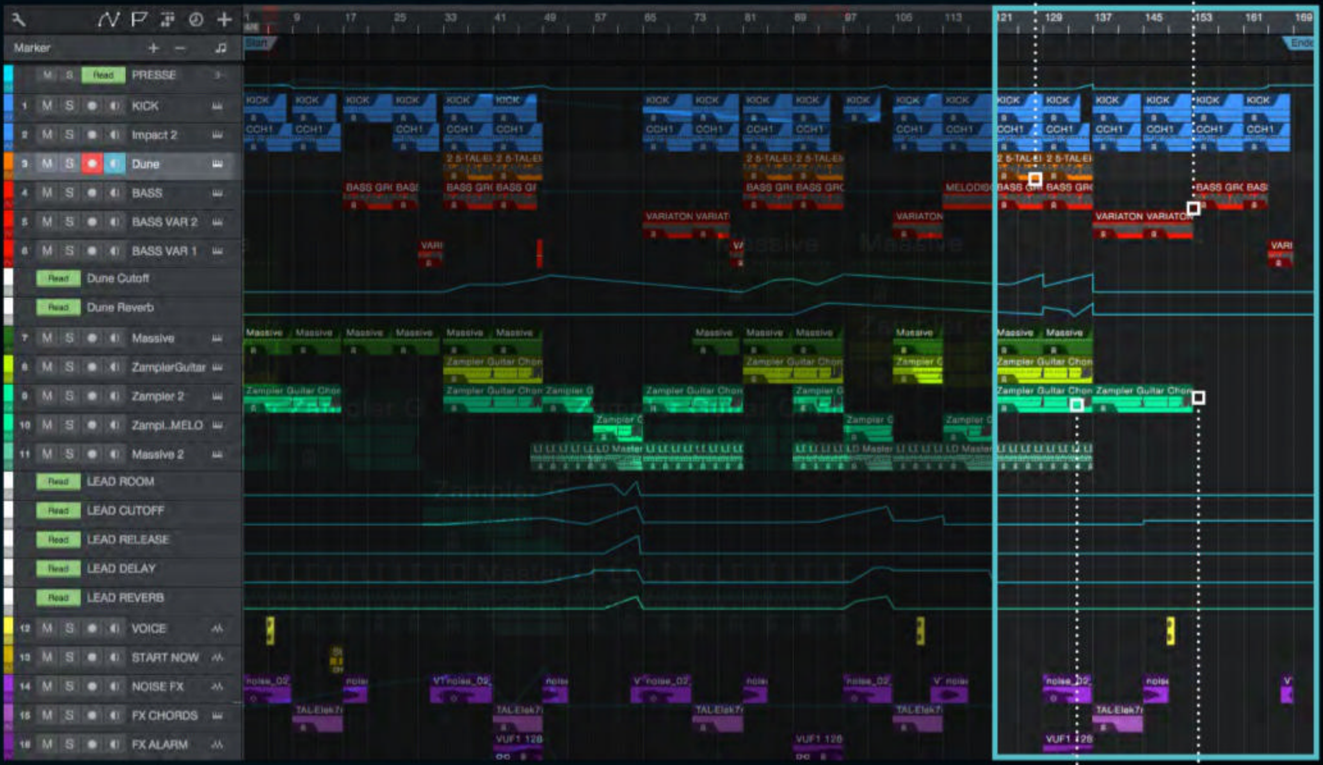
4 | Calm down & outro

Beat and bass

After the climax of the track, the bassline returns to the original pattern and the second bassline kicks in again. The kick ceases in the last two bars of the section.
Why? / Although the peak of the track has been reached, the listener should not immediately fall into a hole again. The new use of the second bassline creates variety, while the kick that stops at the end announces a transition..

Outro

The beat continues unchanged, but every eight bars the kick stops briefly. The bassline plays its first variation (like after the breakdown) over 16 bars and then returns to the usual pattern. After 30 bars, the second variation is used again, while the high-pass filter cuts off the lower range.
Why? / The outro is deliberately kept straightforward and has no large variations, so that the Dj has enough time for the transition to the next track.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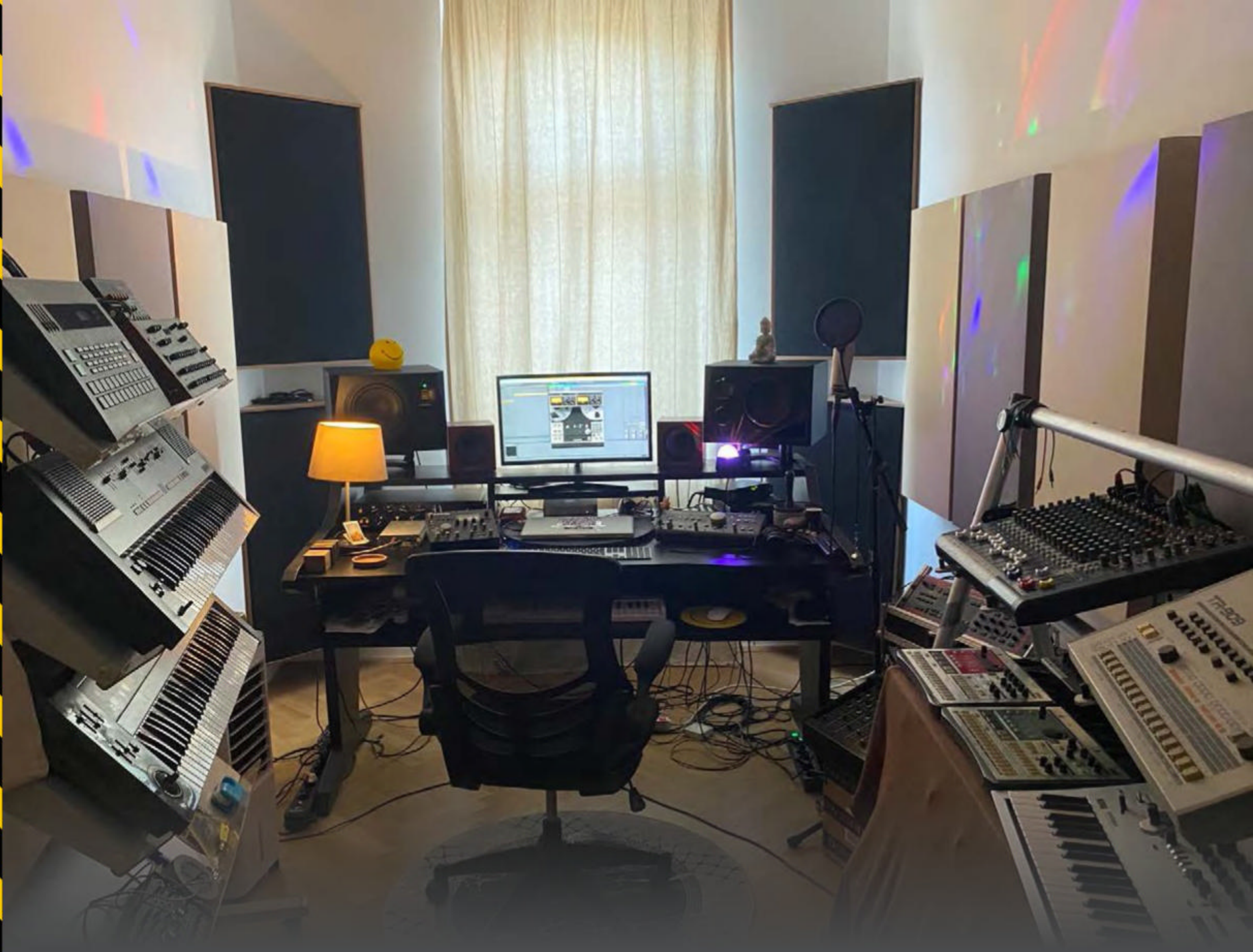
Dune Cutoff
Dune Reverb
Massive
ZamplerGuitar
Zampler 2
Zampl..MELO
Massive 2
LEAD ROOM
LEAD CUTOFF
LEAD RELEASE
LEAD DELAY
LEAD REVERB
VOICE
START NOW
NOISE FX
FX CHORDS
FX ALARM

Chords and hookline

All existing chord tracks are active, as is the hookline, but without a change in pitch. The effects are also used sparingly.
Why? / As after the break, the listener gets the opportunity to process the melodics without stopping to dance. He is carried to the outro without feeling bored.

Chords

The chords play for another 16 bars before they finally stop.
Why? / As with the beat and bass, we do without a lot frills or variety. All elements in the track have conveyed their message, new variations are not needed, because now it's the turn of the next track.



The BEAT Community: Show us your studio!

Georg Nadler aka Jakobin

It‘s always refreshing to see how others set up and work in their studios. After our call on Facebook, we were overwhelmed and that‘s a good thing. So, it quickly became clear that we would turn it into a series to inspire and share with everyone. This month we‘re featuring Georg Nadler aka Jakobin.

Beat / Let us know why you set up and furnished your studio the way you did?

Georg / With pleasure! Since I had an extra room at my disposal after moving into a new apartment about two years ago, I started planning the „acoustic treatment“ quite quickly. I was helped by an old hand in the trade, who I was able to find via Google. He inspected the room and recommended where, which and how many panels were needed for my cuboid room.

After the acoustic aspect of this project, I started looking for a suitable studio table. This table from “Studiodesk” - and I would like to emphasize this - was a real game changer for me, as I finally had space and order for all the most important parts such as my computer, screen, monitors, controller, keyboard and cabling!

To find the best acoustic position for listening, you need to keep about a third of the total length of the room away from the wall, and in my case that worked out very well. As you can see in the pictures, I have positioned a keyboard stand with all my equipment to the left and right of the monitoring position so that I can easily reach everything at any time. You could say I feel like Captain Kirk in the Enterprise *laughs*.

Beat / What tips can you give other readers, what traps should they not fall into when building studios or gear in general?

Georg / First of all, I would say that you don‘t need a studio to make good music. Nowadays, a computer, an interface and headphones are enough to achieve professional results. However, as I mentioned above, I‘ve been at it for a very long time and it has become a passion for me that keeps driving me forward and has finally brought me to this point after many years. In my opinion, it doesn‘t matter what you have, but how you use it. Nevertheless, I love turning knobs and having

different devices at my disposal. It just never gets boring.

Beat / ***Do you produce in your studio as a hobby or do you do it for a living?***
Georg / Neither. I'm a secondary school teacher by profession with reduced working hours. That means I still have time left over to pursue my passion for music. My teacher's salary also gives me the financial security I need, as it's becoming increasingly difficult - if not impossible - to make a living from music in the age of streaming and social media. Respect to all musicians and artists who do this full-time!

Beat / ***How did you acquire the skills for the studio and your productions?***
Georg /Having been around for a really long time and, as I said, doing it passionately, I have acquired more and more knowledge about many aspects of making music over the years. It doesn't just happen to you, it happens all the time and eventually brings you to the point you dreamed of, and I wish that for everyone. Formulating clear goals is just as important as perseverance. What these goals look like is up to you.

I only want to reveal one thing: my goal of releasing music on a label that I love finally came true. Getting rich and having thousands of followers wasn't part of it ... but to each his own.

Beat / ***Which part of your studio could you never do without?***
Georg / I'm clearly referring to my computer: Mac Mini Pro 2. It's the control center, the brain and tape recorder at the same time; sampler and storage of all my ideas, as boring as that may sound...

Beat / ***Do you have an ergonomic focus or a specific focus, for example on workflow or live jams or trouble-free working?***
Georg / As described above, I don't want to have to move too far away and moving equipment around all the time is simply an inspiration killer!

Beat / ***Where and how do you find out about equipment when it comes to purchases for your studio?***
Georg / Mostly in the infinite expanses of YouTube... hehe. But you always have to remain very critical ... not all that glitters is gold.

Beat / ***What special features did you have to contend with when setting up the studio?***
Georg / Thanks to the professional advice I was given, I was able to avoid this stumbling block. My tip: Don't save money at the wrong end!

Beat / ***What kind of music (or style) do you produce the most?***

Georg /I love any kind of music as long as it touches me in some way. But my focus in terms of production has certainly become the House genre, with all its facets.

Beat / ***Do you have any upcoming releases?***
Georg / Yes, I have! My first release on the legendary label Trax Records is coming out on December 20th. Can't be more stoked!

www.instagram.com/jakobin909/
www.soundcloud.com/jakobin909
www.facebook.com/jakobin.official

Severin Kantereit's solo project explores the world of electronic songs with classical instruments.

Photo: Martin Lamberty

> »It's often the imperfect no-players that make a song / sound special.«

Discovered: Kantereit

Shortly after 12

What do you do when your band takes a well-deserved break after intense recording sessions, a new album and an extensive tour? For Severin Kantereit, the answer was clear: make more music. With his ep #1, Kantereit emerges as a solo musician with a surprising love for electro-acoustic pop and gently crackling electronics. It's not a release designed to capture headlines - but hearts. by Tobias Fischer

Immediately after Severin Kantereit had announced his solo project, many people wondered: Why only an EP? Why only four songs? Why music made in a home studio when his main band AnnenMayKantereit is big enough to effortlessly fill Germany‘s biggest stadiums? After spending some time with the music, the answer seems clear: the fact that these laid-back songs somewhere between sofa rave and club melancholia work so well is precisely because they don‘t artificially inflate their ambitions. Britt Daniel, frontman of indie rock band Spoon, once said: „The EP is a musical sweet spot where you can be on your own, under the radar, secure in the knowledge that what you‘re making is just for you and those who love you enough to follow you anywhere.“ That‘s exactly what you‘ll find here: A musician creating in a safe zone, in the moment, completely immersed in the music, without any pressure or expectations.

That said, it is astonishing how many have followed Kantereit to this place.

After all, there are plenty of examples of well-known musicians whose side projects hardly attract more than a handful of fans. But when Kantereit published his first jam sessions on his Instagram profile, the enthusiasm was huge.

To a certain extent, this openness can be traced back to 12, the third AnnenMayKantereit album which the drummer, producer and multi-instrumentalist, who has since moved from Cologne to Berlin, recorded with his two long-time companions and co-band-namesakes Henning May and Christopher Annen. Owing to Covid and the restrictions placed upon them, the trio radically reinvented their sound, playing with space and electronics, with loops and live elements, with arrangements and experimental structures. 12 was not so much their „Kid A“. It was more like their „Pet Sounds“ or „Sgt. Pepper‘s“ - a work that tore down the boundaries of their own creativity. When the band followed up with „Es ist Abend und wir sitzen bei mir“ in 2023, they sounded a little more like their old selves again - but Kantereit had been given carte blanche to build on and go beyond 12 in his solo music. Like May and Annen, he had always tinkered with his own songs on the side and had already contributed electronic elements to AnnenMayKantereit recordings. This time, however, they were not just an accessory, but a focal point. And instead of May‘s rough, agitated voice, his own, far more sensitive vocals were holding the pieces together.

The songs were created without much of a plan

After moving to Berlin, Kantereit set up an intimate studio where he recorded his pieces. Even though synths and a variety of small tools take centre stage, guitar and drums remain important tools: „I‘m trying to find a way to perform parts of my music with real instruments on a stage,“ he says, and the emphasis on the word „real“ suggests that electronics are still, to this day, a kind of terra incognita to be explored, discovered and eventually conquered. He admits as much himself: „I like tinkering with computers, but I always need an analogue instrument that I can play with my hands and fingers.“ The advantage: no randomiser, no matter how advanced, is currently capable of delivering such exciting sounds and ideas as the piano or guitar: „Otherwise everything sounds too smooth for me. It‘s often the imperfect no-players that make a song/sound special.“

The Teenage Engineering OP-1 and the VSS-30 were also used in the jam sessions. With its unique, inbuilt vocoder and its naïve, wistful presets, the VSS-30 has definitely left its mark on the intimate, slightly melancholy mood of the songs. Another vital ingredient is the Omnichord. This very special instrument is popular, among others, with Danish colleague Trentemöller and the quieter, reflective moments of the latter‘s discography are undoubtedly a fitting frame of reference for Kantereit‘s first EP.

However, when I ask him about his current favourites, he doesn‘t mention any of the above-mentioned instruments. Instead, he has a completely different focus: „The most important instrument in my studio at the moment is my short scale Höfner bass in combination with the UAD 6176 PreAmp/Compressor. The bass always plays a very important role for me and with this setup I quickly get a great sound on my own that I hardly need to edit.“ Fittingly, he also uses the legendary Roland Space Echo, whose warm, organic and yet slightly magical reverb is also part of productions by the likes of Nils Frahm. As a result, the new material treads a truly unique middle ground between the three-friends-in-a-room spontaneity of AnnenMayKantereit and the more fantastical sound of most electronic pop projects. You are, as it were, whisked away into a slightly unreal world, while keeping both feet firmly on the ground at all times.

Tangible and physical

In AnnenMayKantereit, Severin is the drummer and I wonder whether the physicality of this instrument also has an influence on the immediately tangible physicality of his own music. Many formidable techno musicians were also originally drummers (most notably Jeff Mills), and the history of jazz knows many examples of drummers with extraordinary compositional talents (from Max Roach and Art Blakey to Tom Skinner and Yussef Dayes). There are currently many great projects by percussionists channelling their ideas into exciting concepts: Matt Evans (who drums to the chirping of oscillators on his current album Soft Science), Munich-based Simon Popp (Blizz sounds like techno for gamelan orchestra) and, on the more extreme end of the scale, KHOMPA, whose drum installations conjure up a veritable electric vortex.

With Kantereit, everything is far more discreet, playful and less „in your face“. When I asked producer Moses Schneider, whom AnnenMayKantereit worked with extensively in the past, about his idea of a perfect drum sound, he summarised the core of his drum recording philosophy as follows: „Drummers who play more quietly will capture more of the space, more of the sound. The quieter someone plays, the more the instrument can unfold its sound. This gives you more options with technology. You can go even further into compression and distortion and bring out beautiful overtones.“ Kantereit follows this ideal on tracks such as „change.“ or the opener „control.“, which develop from a dialogue between precisely quantised, forward-moving beats and other percussive elements recorded directly in the room.“I recently bought the Elektron Analog Rytm MKII to have a good-sounding analogue drum machine next to me on the table,“ says Kantereit, „I mainly use the drum machine for hihats and kicks and I get such a good-sounding signal in the DAW that I have to spend much less time refining the sound afterwards.“ This results in songs that blend in well with the acoustic background, but which you can also immerse yourself in with headphones, allowing for new discoveries with almost each single listen.

A desire to tell stories

Despite his desire to experiment and the pure and simple fun of trying things out, Kantereit always comes back to classic storytelling: At the beginning there may already be a sound, chords or rhythm and he often proceeds without a plan when making music. But as soon as inspiration strikes, „I will usually quickly get an idea of the song.“

On paper, none of this sounds particularly revolutionary. But that‘s not what ep #1 is about anyway. Many years ago, three boys in Cologne wanted an instrument for Christmas, they started rehearsing and suddenly, they had become the school band at Schiller-Gymnasium. There must have been dreams, but none of them probably ever planned more than a handful of songs ahead. It was all about the music, the playing, the joy of creation. That hasn‘t changed to this day.

www.instagram.com/s_kantereit/

DISCOGRAPHY:

// Alles nix Konkretes / 2016
// Schlagschatten / 2018
// 12 / 2020
// Es ist Abend und wir sitzen bei mir / 2023

As Katereit: // ep #1 / 2024

Photo: Gingerdope

Portrait: i Häxa

Witches and the electronic ghosts

The mysterious British project i Häxa blends modern electronic sounds from Industrial, Pop, and Trip-Hop with mythology-inspired lyrics and a magical atmosphere that lives up to the witchy connotations of their name. We spoke with the duo, consisting of vocalist Rebecca Need-Menear and producer Peter Miles (Architects, Dodie, Fizz), about the themes of their self-titled debut album, divided into four chapters, as well as the intriguing production process, which, despite modern technology, heavily incorporates handcrafted elements.

Interview: Sascha Blach

Beat / ***You had some interesting projects before i Häxa. Can you tell us a bit about your other musical activities?***

Becca / I'm also a part of an Alt-Rock band called Anavae. We now create when we feel inspired rather than feeling like we have to, which has been incredibly liberating.

Peter / I was in countless terrible Punk bands in my teens and early 20s. I now run a music studio called Middle Farm Studios, which is nestled in the countryside of Devon.

Beat / ***How did you two come together to form i Häxa?***

Peter / I produced Anavae's album „45". It was during this long and somewhat challenging creative process that Rebecca and I bonded and the initial seeds for i Häxa were sown.

Becca / It became clear that Pete and I had similar tastes and bonded creatively over specific songs on that album, often going off on our own tangents.

> **»There were a few songs that felt like drawing blood from a stone, but for the most part, the songs seemed to fall out into their own spaces.«**

After a couple more passing collaborations, it just made complete sense to continue working together.

Beat / The sound of i Häxa is very unique, as it combines elven melodies, Pop music, Trip Hop, Electronica and harsh Industrial. How did this style come about? Did you have a master plan beforehand or was there a lot of trial and error involved?

Becca / We approached i Häxa as a means to express ourselves, for the sake of creating art, which sounds like an obvious reason to make music, but I'd previously been in an environment where creating music felt more like a business venture, with many, many people to please. Here, anything goes. It's been a lesson in remembering that the best things come from a place of authenticity. Creating for yourself first and foremost instead of trying to funnel yourself through the small hole of what you hope might be commercially viable.

I don't think either of us sat down and decided what style to write in. If the music poured out, felt and sounded good, then we knew we were on to something.

Beat / And how was it geographically?

Peter / I have lived and worked in South Devon for 17 years now, and I couldn't be happier with my environment. My studio Middle Farm is on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park, a constantly inspiring place to call home.

Becca / I was born and still reside in London. Now we're well and truly in the internet age, I don't think it matters where you live when creating music, although it did feel special traveling to Devon to record the majority of the record. Middle Farm feels like an environment hidden away from the world. Mystical in its own way.

Beat / I find this mystical element in your music and singing very interesting. It almost has something witchy and occult about it. Where do you get this inspiration from?

Becca / I've always been drawn to the image of the witch. "Häxa" means witch in Swedish. Britain has such a rich history of pre-Christian paganism, which of course includes Scandinavian pagan influences from Viking invaders. I adore modern witchcraft practices and very much believe writing poetry can be its own form of word magic. i Häxa feels like the first project I've been a part of where I can unleash every influence. From cinema to poetry, from spirituality to my own diary entries. Pete shares my language of talking about music in colors, smells, symbols, and visuals. He very recently asked me if I thought a particular piece should be more like an icy, moonlit lake or a deep chasm where something is grabbing at your feet, which I adore.

Beat / Is there a common thread in the lyrics? Maybe even some kind of concept?

Becca / This world seemed to unravel by itself, accidentally taking on a life of its own, almost by magic. When Pete and I first sat down to make music together, we couldn't have predicted its scale. There were a few songs that felt like drawing blood from a stone, but for the most part, the songs seemed to fall out into their own spaces. At the very start of the project, when I was going through a difficult period, I performed a rune ritual for myself - drawing out four runes to lead the way. Little did I know how effortlessly everything would split into four ways: four seasons (two solstices and two equinoxes) and four elements, each with its own rune which seemed to perfectly describe and represent each movement.

Beat / Can you go more into detail?

Becca / Each section represents a chapter of a journey. Sometimes we get a clear view and can see semblances of a regular life, and at other times, we fall down abstract holes and into the subconscious, fantasies, memories, the fantastical. Sometimes there are sprinkles of being able to see the bigger picture, but just like being human, we really only do get sprinkles. I'd hate to tell people how they're supposed to feel or how to interpret the album.

Similarly to trying to explain a dream to a friend - the true feeling and essence can never truly be shared.

Beat / And what were the musical influences?

Peter / I don't feel that there's any one particular scene or genre that has facilitated this project, but I can say that I was personally heavily inspired by the likes of Björk, Nine Inch Nails, The Prodigy, Radiohead, and Goldie.

Becca / My own music tastes span most every genre, so I feel so pleased to be a part of a project that doesn't limit itself to one. I listen to a great deal of Drone music when working and writing. Nothing inspires my melodies quite like a drone. My loves range from Dark Folk to Metal, from Scandi Pop to British Grime.

Beat / What sound generators were used in the production? Is the majority of the album electronic in nature?

Peter / Many different methods of sound generation were used across the record. A lot of sounds came from pure experimentation where organic sounds were captured and then heavily processed and manipulated. Sounds were often repurposed, looped, and edited to create complex soundscapes across multiple songs. During this album, I was at the beginning of my journey of learning to understand the analogue tape recording process, having moved from working exclusively in the computer to incorporating a two-inch analogue tape. A number of the productions were very heavily influenced by these early experimentations, particularly the track "Inferno," which was recorded and mixed completely on tape, using extensive vary-speed and double-speed tape recording to create horrific soundscapes.

"Inferno" is the result of slowing sounds down by about a fifth.

Beat / And what else?

Peter / No traditional MIDI sounds or synthetic generators, no off-the-peg sample libraries or synth

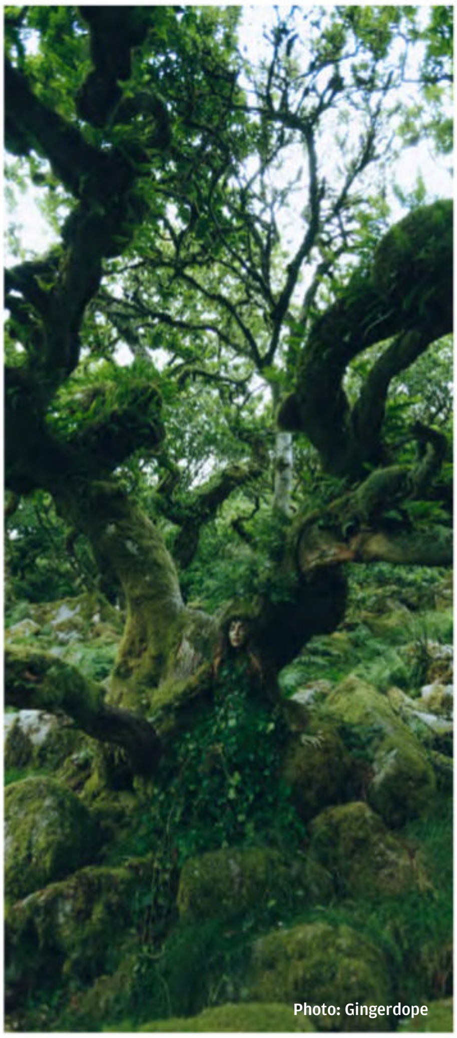


Photo: Gingerdope

presets were used on the album. All the sounds were created in a bespoke manner for each piece and then sometimes recycled throughout the rest of the album. I made extensive use of found sounds. I'll often press record when an inspiring sonic opportunity occurs at Middle Farm Studios. I'll record some improv myself or with whichever musician I'm working with, then save them. Several of the tracks from this project had their genesis in those bits of sounds that were left lying around on tapes or hard drives. Particularly "We Three," which was two separate drum performances by my friend George Lindsay, which I placed side by side, creating the perfect synergy. Those drums were recorded perhaps two years before the i Häxa project. Similarly, the drums that we used on "Part 4" were a one-and-a-half-minute improvisation by a fantastic jazz drummer called Matt Brown. There was also the beautiful piano and vocal from "Last at the Table," which was recorded completely by accident. I managed to secretly capture an intimate improv by Patrick James Pearson and Rachel Sermanni onto tape, which found its way onto the album by mistake, appearing at the end of the recording of "Inferno." We then reworked that same piece several years later to make "Circle," the final piece of the album.

Beat / ***Distortion seems to be an important aspect of your sound - from subtle to very hard. Which distortion devices do you love, and do you have any special tricks for using them?***

Peter / I'm a big fan of distortion! I heavily use tape distortion and often distort my Trident console, plus various other preamps. I consistently use the plugin Soundtoys Devil-Loc. I'm a big fan of the industrial sound at the very beginning of the album on "Underworld." I used Devil-Loc on the soft violin sounds in the intro, which created the grittier sounds later on in the song. I also own several physical Shure N267 mixers, which are the hardware that Devil-Loc is modelled on.

Beat / ***The singing is not limited to sung vocals, but also includes spoken parts, which can be very scary. What was the mood in the studio when you were recording?***

Becca / I've always written poetry but never imagined that I would perform it. Pete was so excited by the idea of spoken word sections and encouraged me to express myself in this different way. When we're about to try something difficult or uncomfortable, we make darkness and candlelight a huge part of the process. The wooden, creaky live room at Middle Farm Studios seems able to transform itself into whatever the performer needs. I must confess, I don't remember tracking a lot of the spoken word sections—not out of disinterest, but I think I became a part of the space. I think I completely de-realised and entered a state of flow.

Beat / ***What did your typical vocal chain look like?***

Peter / We used lots of different microphones across the record, often trying different ones just to see what sounded best at the time. I think the only consistency across the record on vocals was the use of an Empirical Labs Distressor, 10:1 setting, to allow excellent control of dynamics.

Beat / ***But there are also very quiet, reduced piano parts that sound very authentic. Are we hearing a real piano?***

Peter / Yes, all of the pianos on the album are real pianos. As said before, there's no sample libraries used at all. The creaky piano at the beginning of "The Well," for example, was played on my old Steinway Model S Baby Grand 1936, played as quietly as possible so there's more hammer and creaks than there is note.

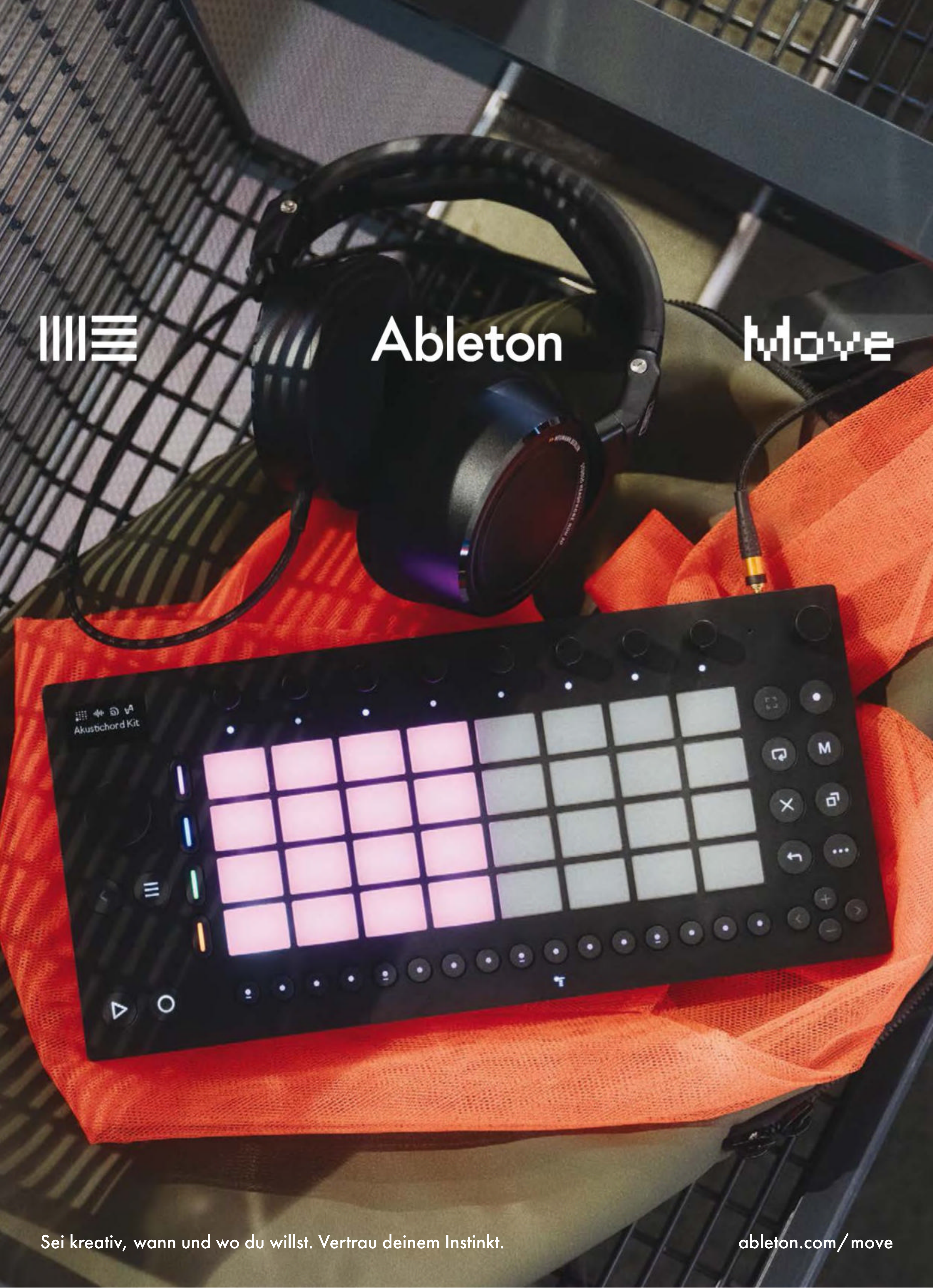
Beat / ***What were the biggest challenges in the mixing process?***

Peter / I personally don't remember any mixing challenges. I remember the mixing process being very closely involved with the production process. Mixing and production were almost always overlapping. I think the most fun was "Inferno," where we did live dub mixes. We did about eight different live mixes off the tape and then edited together different sections from them to create the journey. That was a lot of fun, working on the console and learning its limits. I only remember the mix process being really fun. Weaving the whole record together was a really exciting journey; we kept finding parts that slotted into other parts, making the whole album come together. The biggest challenge came when we reached "Part 3." We had an excess of songs that didn't fit well together, so we ended up having to cut a few, which are currently only available on a bonus vinyl disk that is included with the box set release.
"Part Four" was quite a challenge to complete conceptually, but not sonically. Once we had all the ingredients, it came together well—balancing the vocals against the intense backing track.

Beat / ***Are you working on further releases?***

Peter / The secret bonus disk vinyl Pete mentioned is definitely waiting in the sidelines for the right time for release. In terms of further releases, we're open-minded to the idea of more, but the process has to feel totally organic. When the stars next align! ⁘

www.ihaxa.bandcamp.com



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Digital Culture: The age of productivity

Too much is never enough

More than ever, maximalism rules supreme in the music industry. Albums are getting longer to the point of turning into playlists. No genre has driven this development more than Hip-Hop. Here, the production process has exceeded any previously reasonable measure of productivity. Impressive? Without a doubt. But some things do fall by the wayside. **by Tobias Fischer**

Hip-Hop band Migos released their Culture album in three parts comprising 56 tracks. Curiously, that's not an exception. Photo: Jørund Føreland Pedersen repost.no

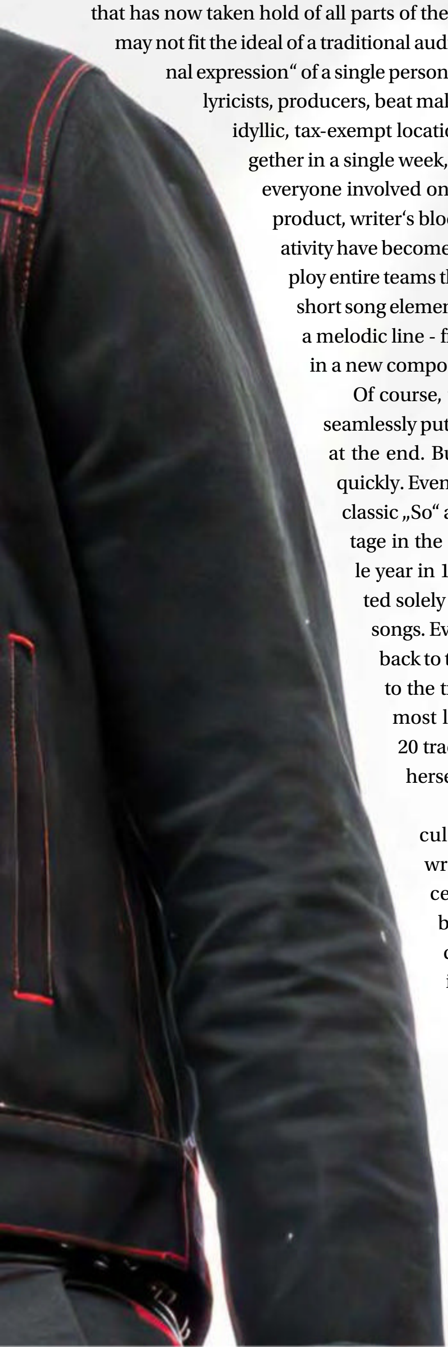
Quality over quantity – it used to be a recipe for success. Today, however, almost all major albums are downright epic: Charli XCX's Brat clocks in at 17 songs, the deluxe anniversary edition of Trippie Redd's A Love Letter to You at 29. Taylor Swift's The Tortured Poets Department comprises 31 compositions and the Migos' Culture, released in three parts, only came to an end after 56 tracks. This can add up to breathtaking numbers. Canadian superstar Drake, for example, has been part of 1,500 songs over the course of his career. Whoever thought Generation Z was lazy has most certainly been proven wrong.

Why are artists recording so much music?

That sounds like a naïve question in the streaming age, and it probably is. When the trend towards increasingly longer releases first began roughly a decade ago, however, things weren't quite so clear-cut. I initially interpreted the movement as an attempt to captivate fans by flooding them with material. Christopher von Deylen aka Schiller, for example, often offered his audience radically extended deluxe packages alongside the standard version of his latest studio album. The fan edition of 2018's Morgenstund, for example, already included 32 tracks. This still didn't seem enough for von Deylen, so he added an accompanying ambient album called „Wanderlust" to it. Effectively, you could listen to Schiller from morning till night without getting bored or having to search for something new.

In the meantime, this immersive "cloud album" aspect has proven to be of secondary importance. Instead, the reasoning for rising track numbers is far more trivial: The more tracks you can offer, the more potential streams you can charge for, the more

> **»For his classic „So“, Peter Gabriel locked himself away in a small cottage for a year, but only composed 8 songs. In that time, Beyonce would have already recorded two complete projects with 20 tracks each.«**



playlists you can serve - and the higher your revenue will be. The album is turning into a container from which algorithms can freely draw material and each song is a data node composed of parameters such as target group, tempo, mood and intended use. The more data nodes this container contains, the more links it can generate, the higher the probability that they can be included in existing networks like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. It is not surprising that producers and record companies were eventually won over by this logic and discovered it for themselves. Which brings us to the actual mystery:

How can anyone produce so much music in so little time?

One key on the road to productivity is undoubtedly the extreme division of labour that has now taken hold of all parts of the music industry. Writing by committee may not fit the ideal of a traditional audience that still believes art is the „personal expression“ of a single person. But this process, in which songwriters, lyricists, producers, beat makers and singers often come together in idyllic, tax-exempt locations to write hundreds of new songs together in a single week, has proven extremely fruitful. Because everyone involved only contributes one element to the final product, writer‘s block no longer is an issue and lulls in creativity have become rare. Many big acts will frequently employ entire teams that buy samples, lyrics, parts of lyrics or short song elements – such as a suitable chorus, bridge or a melodic line - from all over the world for potential use in a new composition.

Of course, this process still requires producers to seamlessly put together these individual components at the end. But it does deliver tangible results very quickly. Even though Peter Gabriel, leading up to his classic „So“ album, locked himself up in a small cottage in the English countryside for almost a whole year in 1985 with a group of musicians dedicated solely to this project, he only came up with 8 songs. Eventually, the record company sent him back to the studio to add at least one more song to the track list. Someone like Beyonce would most likely have finished two full records at 20 tracks each in the same span, reinventing herself from scratch in the process.

This division of labour works particularly well wherever traditional songwriting on the piano or guitar is replaced by melody and lyric creation over a backing track. New beats can be produced at a breathtaking rate and if that isn‘t fast enough, you can simply buy type beats online. Apart from Taylor Swift, who is clearly driven by an impulsive urge to write and is able to maintain a remarkably high level of quality thanks to perfectly fitting creative partners, most classic songwriters are unable to keep up with rap‘s frantic pace. As a result, the song format is changing: Although most songs nowadays still vaguely make use of the familiar verse-chorus-grid, they will drape it over a rigid loop, thereby further blurring the borders between styles.

It is hardly surprising that Hip-Hop is spearheading this development

In contrast to pop, Hip-Hop is not so much based on melody and harmony but foremost on rhythm and lyrics and its basic framework, even for productions at the very top of the game, can be recorded by a team of two members - producer plus rapper. The key technique of any modern Hip-Hop production, which has given the genre a clear lead over all others and which has remained unique in this form to this day, is the so-called „punching in.“ As part of this approach, the rapper begins by improvising the lyrics straight away to the first bars of music - often without having committed a single word to paper. The first lines are recorded as often as required or desired until everyone is satisfied. The next two lines follow immediately afterwards and this continues until the song is complete and then receives the finishing touches from the production department. „Punching in“ may enjoy a bad reputation among many amateur musicians. Among professional rappers and the biggest stars, however, the method has long since established itself as an industry-wide standard.

„Punching In“ has clear advantages for the finished product: It allows extremely long and fast cascades of words to be strung together without the vocalist audibly getting out of breath; you can easily try out different performance variations and use the best take immediately. If, for the production side of things, you follow best practises, you will end up with a song that will generally sound completely organic, despite the fragmented nature of the recording. The most important thing, however, is that you can get started straight away, without having to wait for „inspiration“ to kick in. „Punching in“ allows a well-oiled team to complete a track at lightning speed and, if necessary, a full album within a few days. The only downside to the concept is that most acts are rarely able to perform and reproduce the same verses live on stage. Even someone like the universally respected Kendrick Lamar has been known to swallow many words of the original lyrics in concert, or to simply forget passages. That said, none of this seems to affect anyone on a critical or commercial level.

Farewell to tradition?

The press has so far devoted very little attention to punching in, despite it being used almost since the birth of the genre, and its ever-increasing dominance. Those journalists who do cover it, tend to analyse it from a meta point of view – such as it heralding the return of „orality“ in music, i.e. the final farewell to the Western tradition of documenting music in a written format. The same also applies to our consumption of information, which is taking place less and less via magazines, newspapers and blogs and more and more via images, videos and podcasts.

What is more interesting from a creative point of view is that hip hop, which was once regarded as the modern day continuation of the griot tradition of storytelling, is ultimately no longer a narrative art form. Instead, lyrics are more akin to verbal collages, miniature DJ sets in which words become samples, and sentences turn into quotable memes which, when combined, reflect our increasingly fragmented flow of thoughts.

Is that a good thing? It certainly is historically logical, theoretically even inspiring – although, in practice, the end result is not necessarily anything to write home about. Admittedly, there have always been attempts at a counter-movement: Dua Lipa‘s Radical Optimism only had 11 songs, Kendrick Lamar‘s GNX clocked in at 12, and Kylie Minogue‘s Tension II at 13. Even some Hip-Hop fans are bemoaning the excessive amount of material hurled in their direction. Unfortunately, the success of the aforementioned shorter albums didn‘t come close to that of the streaming epics. As long as it pays off, more will always be more. ⁘

Vollversion: DHPlugins HALO 2 Lite

MonsterSynth for Drum&Bass

Many sound designers have cut their teeth on the brutal bass and lead sounds of Drum & Bass, Future Bass and Dubstep. With our software highlight, DHPlugins HALO-2 Lite, they become child‘s play. This monster synth combines powerful synthesis with flexible samples and shines with massive Basses, screeching Leads and classic Reese sounds - perfect for bass-heavy genres!

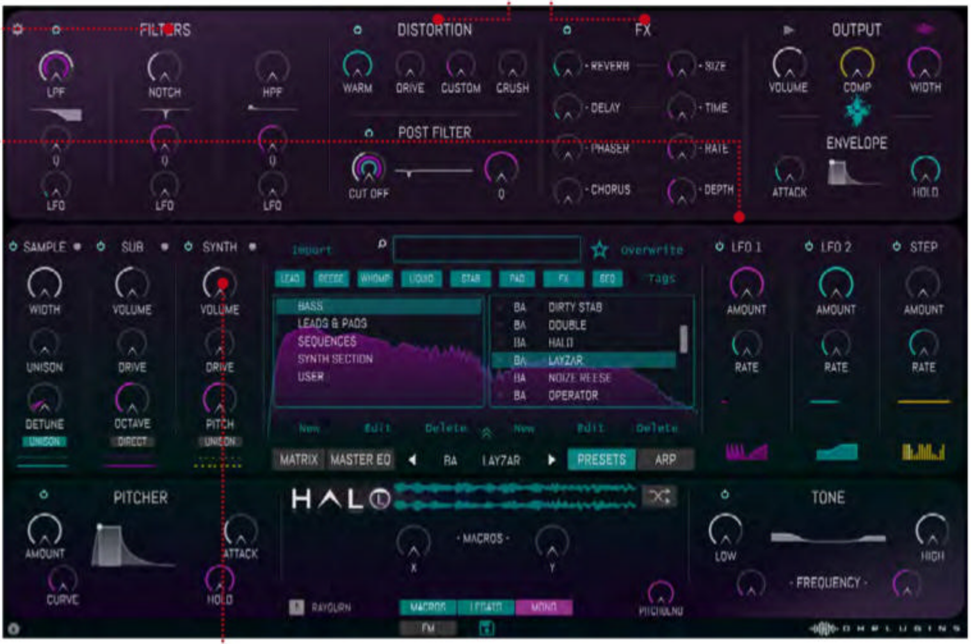
by Mario Schumacher

More info:
Info at: www.dhplugins.com
License & password: www.serialcenter.de

Flexible filter section
The filter section of the synthesizer has it all, with three filters where you can choose between **Lowpass**, **Highpass**, **Bandpass**, **Notch**, **Peak** and **Phase**.

Distinctive distortion
Distortion is a must for the brutal basses and leads typical of Neurofunk and similar styles. The HALO-2 Lite‘s **Distortion** Module offers various modes (**Warm**, **Drive**, **Custom** and **Crush**). A modulatable Post-Filter follows in the signal path.

Effects galore
The effects section of HALO-2 Lite is also powerful, with **Reverb**, **Delay**, **Phaser** and **Chorus**, whose parameters can all be modulated. For the finishing touches, there is a Multiband Compressor, a Master EQ and a Shelving Filter.


FILTERS
LPF
NOTCH
HPF
LFO
DISTORTION
WARM
DRIVE
CUSTOM
CRUSH
POST FILTER
CUT OFF
FX
REVERB
SIZE
DELAY
TIME
PHASER
RATE
CHORUS
DEPTH
OUTPUT
VOLUME
COMP
WIDTH
ENVELOPE
ATTACK
HOLD
SAMPLE
SUB
SYNTH
WIDTH
VOLUME
UNISON
DRIVE
DETUNE
OCTAVE
PITCH
Import
Overwrite
LEAD
REESE
WHOMP
LIQUID
STAB
PAD
FX
SEQ
Tags
BASS
LEADS & PADS
SEQUENCES
SYNTH SECTION
USER
DIRTY STAB
DOUBLE
HALO
LAYZAR
NOIZE REESE
OPERATOR
New
Edit
Delete
MATRIX
MASTER EQ
BA LAYZAR
PRESETS
ARP
LFO 1
LFO 2
STEP
AMOUNT
RATE
PITCHER
AMOUNT
CURVE
ATTACK
HOLD
HALO
MACROS
X
Y
MACROS
LFO
MONO
FM
PITCHLNG
TONE
LOW
HIGH
FREQUENCY
DHPLUGINS

Animate your sound!
Rhythmic modulations are a must for Drum & Bass and Dubstep sounds. HALO-2 Lite offers two freely drawable LFOs and a step sequencer for gate effects. An ADSR envelope is also on board. **Pitcher**, on the other hand, allows you to create pitch slides and accentuated attacks.

Synth Panel
The three oscillators are the heart of **HALO-2 Lite**‘s sound generation. The synth and sub-oscillators provide powerful basses, while the sample oscillator delivers aggressive Neurofunk sounds. Thanks to **Drive**, **Sample-FM** and the **Unison** function, distorted sounds and wide reese sounds can also be created effortlessly.

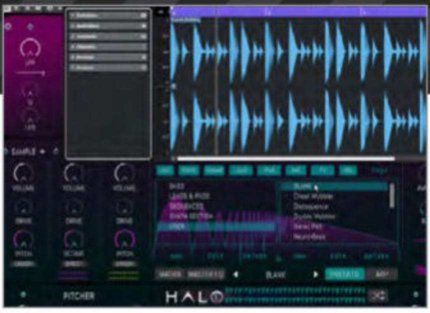
REGISTRATION & INSTALLATION

DHPlugins HALO-2 Lite can be registered via our www.serialcenter.de. After registering the data for the current Beat edition, you will receive your coupon code by e-mail. Add HALO-2 Lite to your shopping cart at www.dhplugins.com, enter your coupon code and complete your order. The first time you load it in your DAW, you will be asked for the License Key, which you can find in your DHPlugins account.

[1] www.loopcloud.com

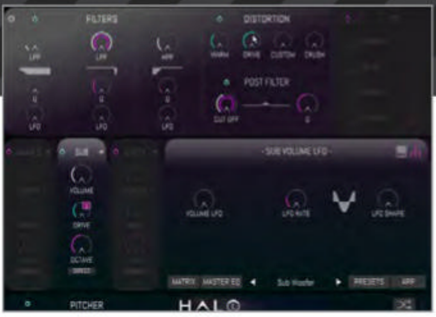
1 Sound Challenge

DHPlugins HALO-2 Lite shines with its combination of synthesis and samples, especially when it comes to aggressive sounds, which are indispensable in Drum & Bass, Future Bass or Dubstep. Fancy a little sound design challenge? We'll show you how to use the synth to create the most important synth sounds for a powerful Neurofunk track.



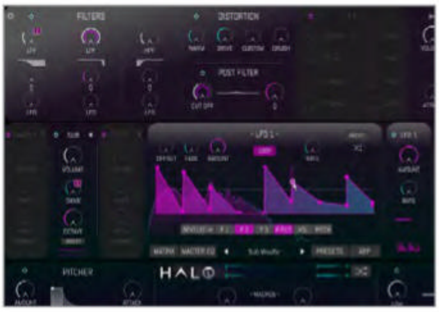
2 Drum&Bass Beat

Every Neurofunk track needs a solid rhythmic foundation. First, arm yourself with a suitable drum loop, such as from the **Loopcloud [1]**. We opt for a driving beat at 174 BPM. A powerful sub-bass is the heart of every Drum & Bass track. Load HALO-2 Lite as a virtual instrument and select the **BLANK** preset.



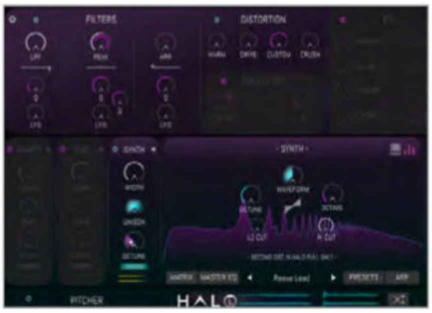
3 Sub-Bass

Deactivate the **Sample** and **Synth** so that only the Sub-oscillator can be heard. Turn the **Drive** to **0.12** and increase the **Warm** and **Drive** values of the **Distortion** effect to give the sub-bass more overtones. The LFO gives the sub-bass more rhythmic pulsation. To do this, click on **LFO 1** and set a **Rate** of **1/1**.



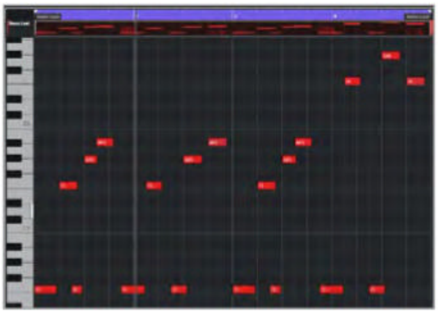
4 Filter Modulation

Right-click on **LPF** and then on **Connect to LFO 1** and turn the LFO Amount all the way up. Also connect the LFO to **Sub: Drive** and **Output: Volume**. Now draw an LFO sequence like the one shown. Make sure that the curve points are on the grid so that the sequence is Tempo-synchronized. Adjust the **Fade** as **desired**.



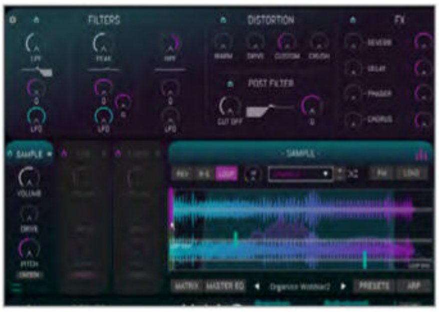
5 Reese Lead

Now the Sub-Bass is amplified by a distorted Reese Lead. Start with the **BLANK** preset and deactivate **Sample**. Select the **Legato** playback mode and activate **Glide** with a **Glide Time** of **174 ms**. Then, increase the **Drive** value for the **Synth** Module to **0.50** and click on **Unison**. Adjust the **Unison** parameters as shown in the picture.



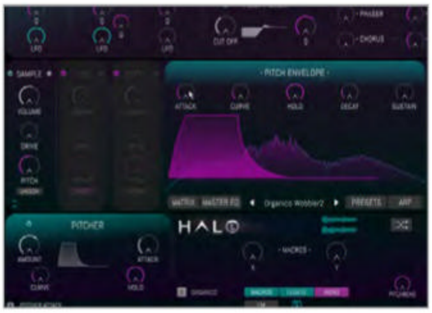
6 Distortion? Of course!

The result is a massive Reese sound with lively beats that gets even fatter thanks to the Sub-Oscillator. Add a little Distortion, Reverb and Phaser and our Lead sound is lively and room-filling. Use the Master Effects here for fine-tuning. The Glide effect provides dynamic transitions, especially for octave jumps.



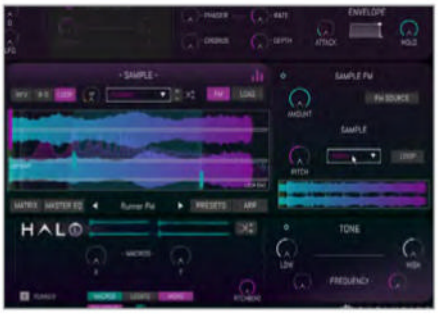
7 Bass accents

How about some distorted Bass accents? Load another instance of HALO-2 Lite with the **BLANK** preset, deactivate the **Sub** and **Synth** and activate the **Sample**. Select a Sample like **Organico**, **Punch** or **Rogue**, activate the **Loop** Mode and set the Sample Start as desired. For more bite, we bring Distortion into play.



8 Custom Distortion

Set **Custom** to **0.5** and click on **Distortion**. In the **Custom Distortion** menu, select a preset that you like, such as **Hammer**, and experiment with **Gain**, **Bias** and **Reducer**. Finally, you can use the **Pitcher** to emphasize the attack of the sound. If you like, you can also modulate the Filter Frequencies for a livelier sound.



9 Sample FM

Want to give Sample-based sounds more bite? Then definitely give Sample FM a try! We recommend using a Sample that is not so heavily distorted, such as **Runner**. Click on **FM** and activate **Sample FM**. Then, select a Sample such as **Rogue** under **FM Source**, turn up the **Amount** and set the **Pitch** to your liking.

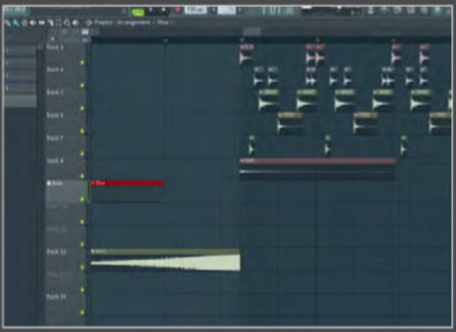
Power Producer: FL Studio

More drama with drum fills

The chorus should be coming soon, right? Ah, no, not at all. Oh, but now it is. To make music catchier, it's very important to take listeners by the hand and lead them to the next part of the song with certain musical elements. Drum fills are pretty good for this and, as it turns out, are easy to build yourself. **by Ruben Mantel**

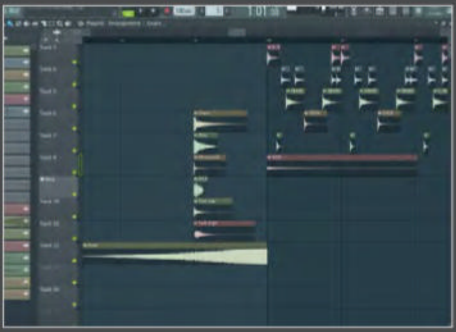
Project info

Material: Fruity Loops Studio 2024
Time required: 20 minutes
Content: Creation of a self-made drum fill.
Difficulty: Beginner



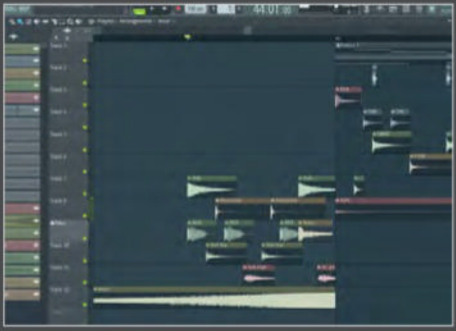
1 Beatbox

Admittedly, a pretty funny but incredibly effective trick is to Beatbox the fill before you mix in any samples. This gives you a good idea of what you ultimately want to achieve. Listen to the transition and play out loud, or in your head, the **rhythm** of the drums that lead from one part to the next.



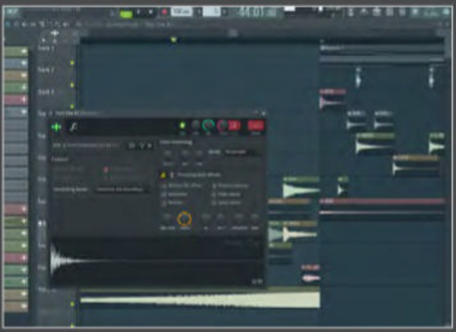
2 Sounds

Which sounds are played is just as important as when they are played. Since the latter has already been clarified, we will now try to find suitable drum sounds. In genres such as Rock or Metal, samples of real drum sets are usually suitable, while for electronic styles, colorful mixtures of **synthetic drums** are often suitable.



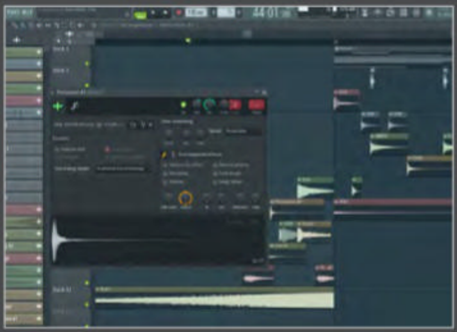
3 Implementation

It's time to put theory into practice. Set up the individual drums as designed and make sure there is enough variation in the sounds. Also keep an eye on the frequency spectrum, as drums with many low frequencies, such as toms or kicks, can be layered wonderfully with cymbals that consist of many high frequencies.



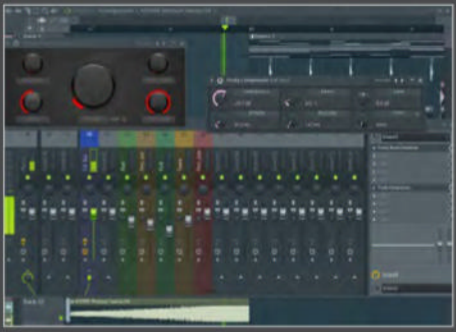
4 Pitching

In electronic music, it is common to use sounds with different pitches to make the fill more interesting. Experiment with the **Pitch** of different drums. With **tonal** drums such as kicks or toms, the key should be taken into account, whereas with cymbals, for example, it is irrelevant due to their **atonality**.



5 Panning

Use Panning for more variety by placing sounds at different positions in the stereo field. Use only low values between 0 and 30% for panning in both directions if you want to simulate the most realistic fill possible from a real drum kit. Again, strong panning is in the spirit of electronic music.



6 Mixing

To make the fill sound more cohesive, we route all the individual sounds to a **Bus Channel** in the mixer. Then, we color the drums a little using the **Fruity Blood Overdrive** plug-in with approx. **0.1 Pre Amp**. Finally, the fill is moderately compressed using the Fruity Compressor with a medium Attack, fast Release and 4:1 Ratio.

Power Producer: Logic Pro 11

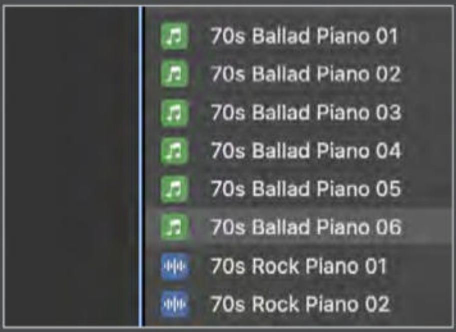
Reverse layer for pro sound

Instruments such as pianos, guitars and keyboards are often elements that are used in songs. Why? Because they have worked in countless successful tracks for decades. However, this also makes them sound anything but special. With the technique we'll show you in this workshop, you can transform even the simplest piano, guitar or keyboard sound into something special.

by Stefan Hofmann

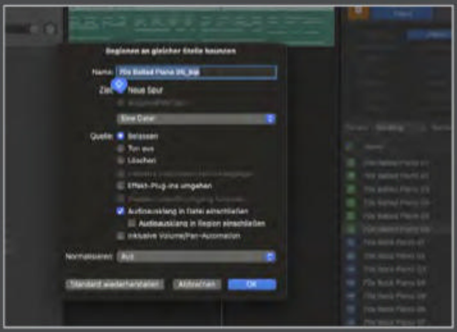
Project info

Material: Logic Pro (Version 11.1)
Time required: 20 minutes
Content: Create reverse layer
Difficulty: Advanced



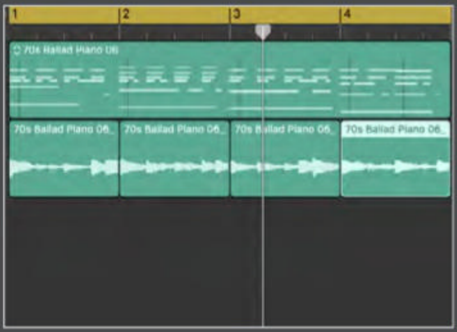
1 Select sound

With the reverse layer technique, it doesn't matter whether you choose a guitar, piano, string sound or similar. This technique can also work with a Bass. In this article, however, we would like to focus on the melody-leading instruments. In our case, we will use the MIDI file **70s Ballad Piano 06** from the Apple Loops library.



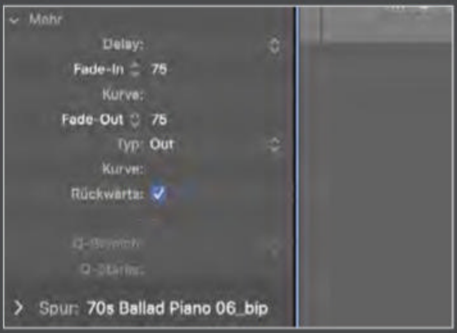
2 Bounce

Next, right-click on the MIDI file, **Bounce and Connect**, **Bounce to Same Location**. Select **New Track** as the destination, **Leave as is** as the source and **Include audio decay in file**. You can leave **Bypass effect plug-ins** unchecked, as the effected sound fits better with the source file.



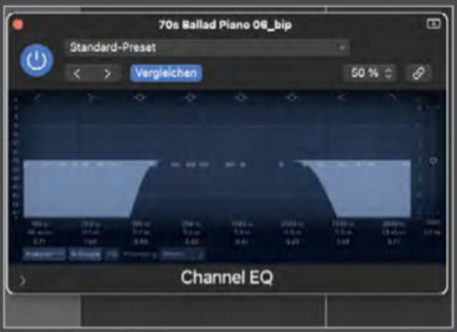
3 Cutting

If you already have an audio file as a source track, you can save yourself the second step. In this case, it's enough to copy the source material to a new track. Next, set a cut for each chord change or emphasis. In our case, we will use the scissors on the second, third and fourth beats.


Mehr
Delay:
Fade-In 75
Kurve:
Fade-Out 75
Typ: Out
Kurve:
Rückwärts: ☑
Spur: 70s Ballad Piano 06_bip

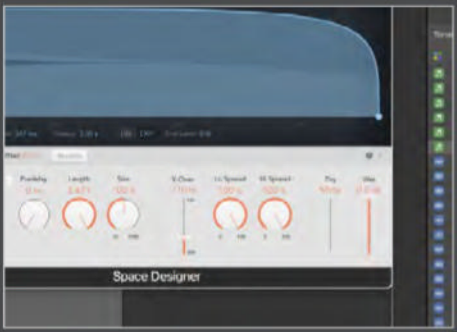
4 Reverse and fades

Select all audio files on the reverse track and check the **Reverse** box under **Fades** on the left-hand side of the Region tab. Fade-ins and Fade-outs help to eliminate possible pops. A value of 75 for both parameters should be sufficient. Cut off the end of each element to reduce the sustain of the original attack.



5 Lowering frequencies

To separate the reversed signal from the original, you should use Logic's Channel EQ. Set a generous lowcut at around **180 Hz** and a generous highcut at around **3,500 Hz**. Open a new Bus to dip the signal into a good portion of reverb. In our case, Logic's Space Designer did the job.



6 Drown in reverb

When choosing a reverb, you should focus on large rooms. In any case, a church is much better than a room plastered with absorbers. In our case, the preset **3.7s_Metallic Room** was perfect for the track. It is important that the selected reverb washes out the signal properly. Now press **Play** and enjoy the magic.

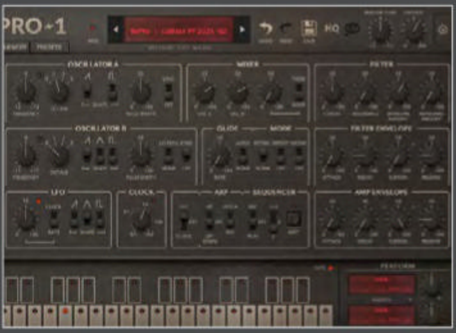
Power Producer: Cubase

Complex Modulation? Easy!

So, you'd love to add lively modulations to your favorite software synthesizer or effects plug-in, but it doesn't have LFOs or a step sequencer? No problem! Version 14 of Cubase comes with six powerful modulators to turn VST3 synths and effects into true modulation monsters! **by Vera Schumacher**

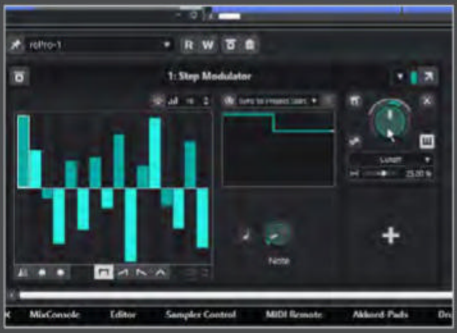
Project info

Material: Cubase 14 Pro
Time required: About 30 minutes
Content: Spice up simple synth sounds with complex modulations.
Difficulty: Advanced



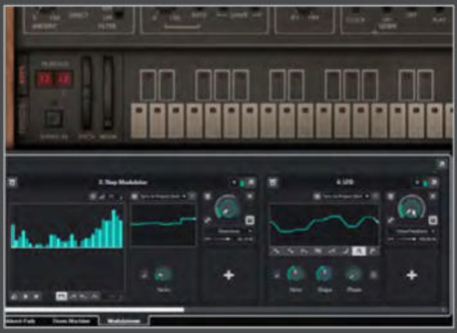
1 In modulation heaven

You probably have a favorite VST3 synth that sounds great, but unfortunately, doesn't offer all the modulation options you want. With Cubase's Modulators, you can now easily add them! Load the synth of your choice like u-he Repro-1 [1] and create a simple sound like the patch shown. Then, activate the lower **Zone**.



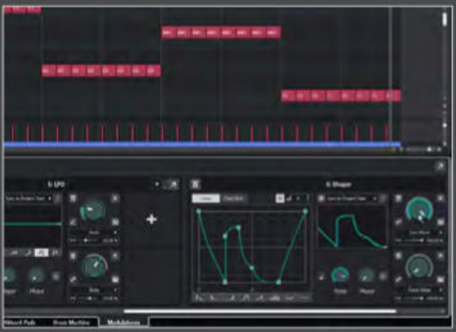
2 Step sequences

There, switch to **Modulators**. Now add a **Step Modulator** and draw in a sequence. **Click** on the + symbol and then on the cutoff Control of Repro-1 and the filter frequency will be modulated. Adjust the **Cutoff** Control and the **Modulation Depth** as desired. Then, program a sixteenth note sequence for the synthesizer.



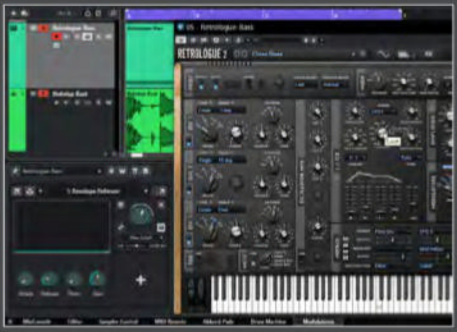
3 Synth parameter

That sounds cool, but there's much more to it! Link an LFO in Modulator Slot 2 to the **Decay** Control of the synth's filter envelope. A second **Step Modulator** ensures that the filter resonance ramps up at the end of each bar. Want a little more noise? Link another LFO to the **Noise/Feedback Control** of Repro-1.



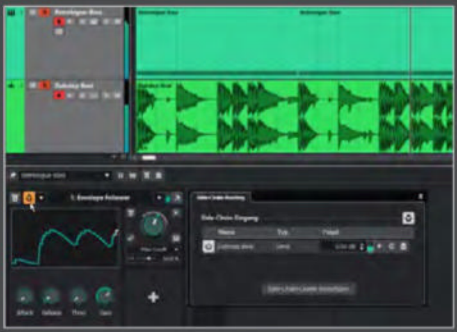
4 Modulation

Select **S & H 1** as the LFO waveform and experiment with the **LFO Rates** and **Shape** values. Control the LFO Rates with an LFO or Step Modulator for even more rhythmic variation. Also, try out the **Shaper**, where you can draw your own curves, for example, to switch between different oscillator waveforms.



5 Envelope follower

In just a few minutes, you can create a sequence that sounds like a fat modular system! Another highlight of the modulators is the **Envelope Follower**, which follows the amplitude of the input signal. Try this out in Retrologue with the **Cross Bass** preset. Activate the **Envelope Follower** in Slot 1 of the Modulators.



6 Sidechain tricks

Now route it to **Filter Cutoff** from **Retrologue**. Then, load a drum loop like our Dubstep Beat onto an audio track. Activate **Side-Chaining** for the Modulator and select **Dubstep Beat** as the **Side-Chain Input**. Cool, now the envelope follower follows the dynamics of the beat! Experiment with the module settings for the best results.

[1] www.u-he.com

Power Producer: Ableton Live

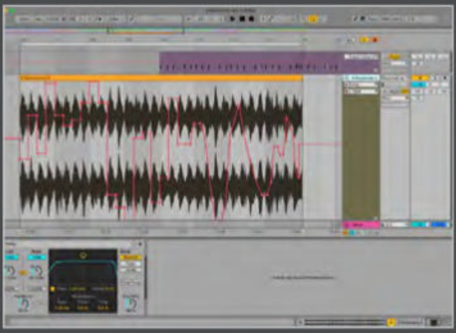
From boring to unique

Do your breaks sound uninspired? Then try using percussive ear candy. This will not only add dynamics and excitement to your song, but it will also give it a very individual touch. Particularly in breaks and fills, percussive ear candy can provide surprising twists and turns and make transitions between parts of the song more fluid. In this workshop, you will learn how to set unique accents through creative resampling and targeted modulation.

by Maya C. Sternel

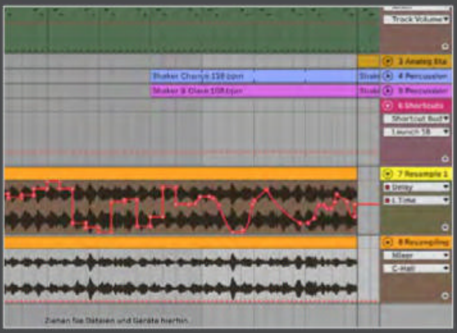
Project info

Material: Ableton Live 12
Time required: 45 minutes
Content: Creating percussive ear candy using multiple Resampling, Effect Automation and Envelope Modulations, possibilities of sound design, using Breaks and Fills effectively, using connecting elements between song parts.
Difficulty: Advanced



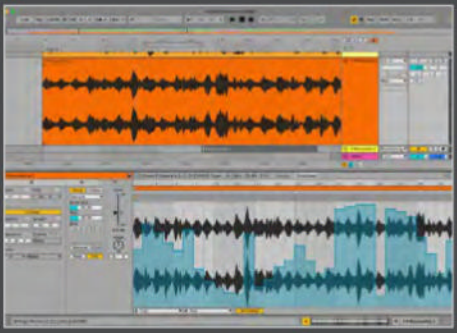
1 Automate delay

To create musically impressive breaks, first resample an 8-bar phrase from your song. Place the resample in a new track and load a delay. Select **Time** as the delay mode. Switch to automation mode and activate **Stereo Link**. Draw an arbitrary automation for the delay time over the entire length of the sample.



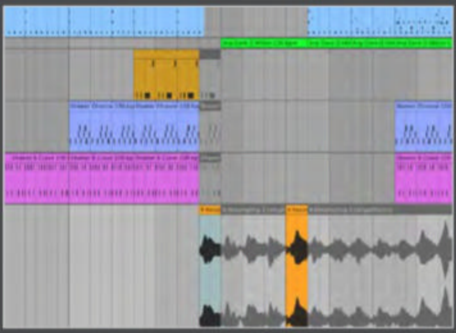
2 Create resamples

Resample the resample with the delay again. Lock the automation curve and then delete the first resample. Drag the second Resample into the track of the first. The delay with the automation curve has been retained. Now resample the resample again. Then, continue working with the last resample only. Select the **Texture** Warp Mode for this.



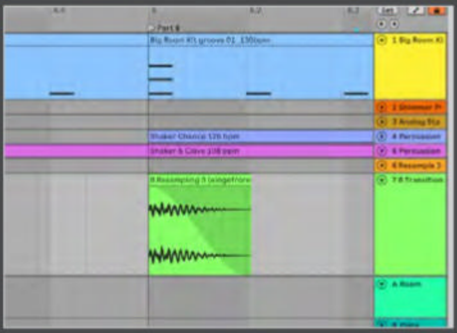
3 Edit audio

Halve the original tempo of the resample several times in the audio editor. Go to the envelope view and arbitrarily modulate grain size and flux over the entire phrase. Right-click on the sample to freeze the track **as audio**. Then, select **Complex** as the **Warp Mode**. Move the resample to where you want to insert fills.



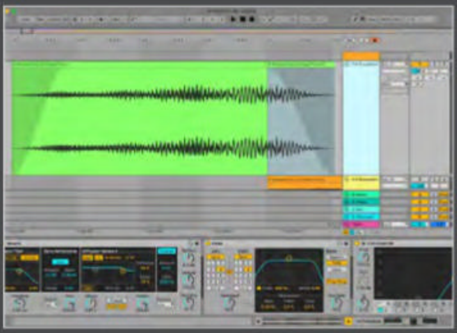
4 Place fills

The bar before a new part begins is particularly suitable. Mute the resample. Now, activate individual bars. Optionally, mute other tracks so that the resample can be heard better. To scroll through the resample, activate Loop and change the **Start Marker** in the clip or hold down **Cmd+Shift** while moving the mouse over the sample.



5 Designing transitions

Short rising and falling sounds are suitable for making transitions from one part to the next more fluid. They signal the end or beginning of a phrase and build up tension and relaxation. Select a short, ascending part from the resample. Place it in a new audio track on the first quarter of a new part.



6 Build tension

Duplicate the section and reverse it using the reverse function. Place the reverse sample seamlessly in front of the other sample. Then, extend the reverse sample to a length of one bar. Load a reverb with a **Decay** of 5 ms and a delay into the track. Set both **Dry/Wets** to approximately **45%**. Load an EQ with a lowcut at 700 Hz.

Presets and audio demos
in the magazine downloads
(see Page 9)

Power Producer: Bitwig Studio

Epic pads „without“ MPE

MPE, MIDI Polyphonic Expression, has existed as an extension of MIDI 1.0 for several years now. Nevertheless, the number of controllers, such as the Roli Seaboard, Linnstrument, Espressive-E Osmose and Ableton Push 3, is rather limited. To modulate polyphonically on three levels, which is what MPE is all about, you don‘t necessarily need a controller. Bitwig Studio, in particular, offers a wide range of options for drawing MPE signals directly into the clip with your mouse. We‘ll show you how! **by Laura Emiliano**

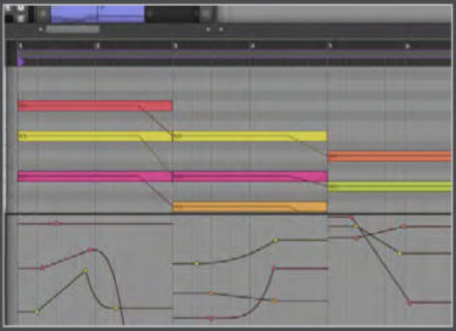
Project info

Material: Bitwig Studio 5
Time required: 30-60 minutes
Content: Create MPE modulations in Bitwig‘s MIDI clips.
Difficulty: Advanced to Pro

Audio demo

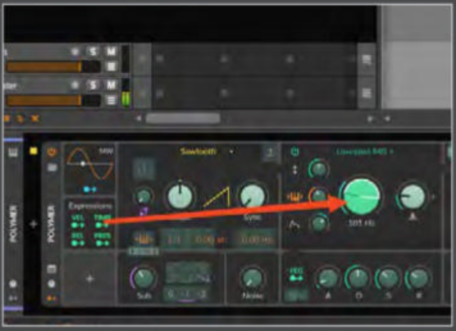
1 Was is MPE?

MPE provides polyphonic modulation on usually three (or four or five) levels. In practice, this means, for instance, that with three-part chords, the highest note creates an atmospheric vibrato, the middle note makes the LFO play faster and the lowest note opens the synth‘s cutoff - simultaneously and independently of each other.



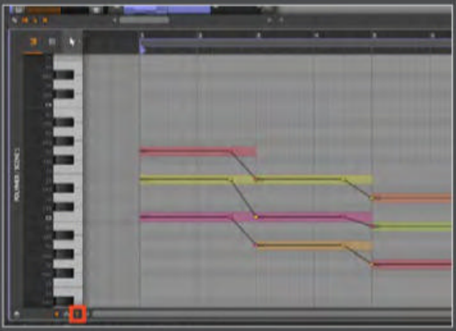
2 MPE in Bitwig

With controllers such as the Roli Seaboard M, this allows for incredibly expressive play. But even if you use the MPE streams directly in Bitwig and draw modulation curves, the DAW becomes an even more powerful sound design tool - for internal instruments such as Polymer, but also for some (not all) VST instruments.



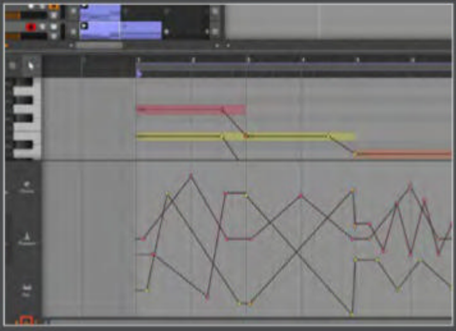
3 Polyphonic modulation

Bitwig‘s internal instruments are all MPE-capable. Let‘s get started with Polymer on an instrument track. To get started, set Polymer to sawtooth and turn cutoff to 100 Hz. Now create a MIDI clip and record some chords, with at least three voices. You will find the expression modulator on the left in Polymer.



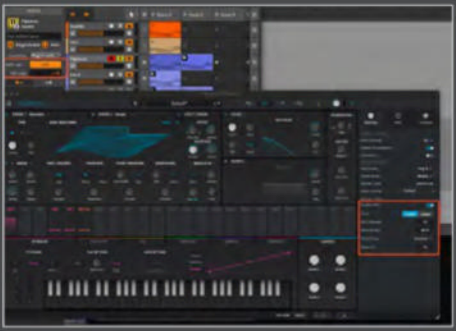
4 Pitchbend

From there, modulate the cutoff with **TIMB** and Resonance with **PRESS**. Now go to the MIDI clip and open the Micropitch Expressions view at the bottom. Now you can see a line on each note, on which you can set points like with automation. Draw curves to the next note in the next chord - polyphonic glides just like with strings.



5 Timbre and pressure

Switch to the note expressions view in the MIDI clip and then to timbre. Again, you can now draw different curves for each of the three notes. And the cutoff in Polymer opens differently for each note. Repeat the whole thing with the pressure parameter. Incidentally, each curve can only be as long as the corresponding note.



6 Reverse and remix

VSTs such as Serum, Novum and Pigments can handle MPE, but in Bitwig this must be activated in the settings of the virtual instrument (top left in the info area when the plugin is selected). And the corresponding modulators, such as slide or pressure in the VST must then be linked to parameters.

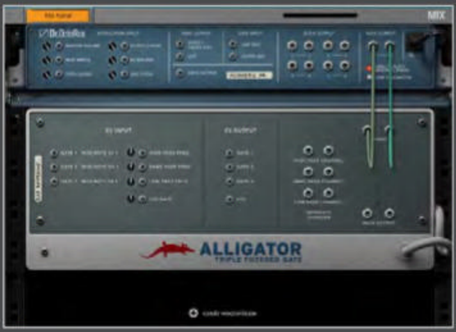
Power Producer: Reason

Ear-Catcher multiband effect

Alligator is predestined to extend the method of Matrix-based multipass gating. In this case with a trio of Ripley delays. The big advantage of this method is that it is quick and provides very variable creative effects. Instead of three Ripleys, you can, of course, also use three completely different effect units. **by Maveric**

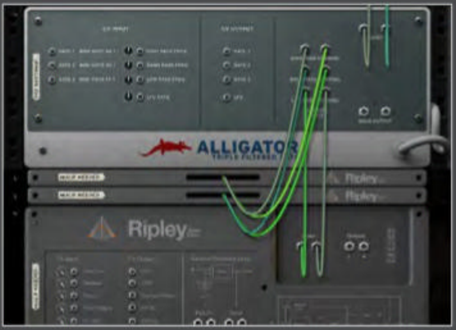
Project info

Material: Reason 13
Time required: 15 - 20 minutes
Content: A sound is routed through a pattern-based multipass gate to three different instances of the Ripley.
Difficulty: Advanced


Dr.OctoRex
ALLIGATOR
TRIPLE FILTERED GATE

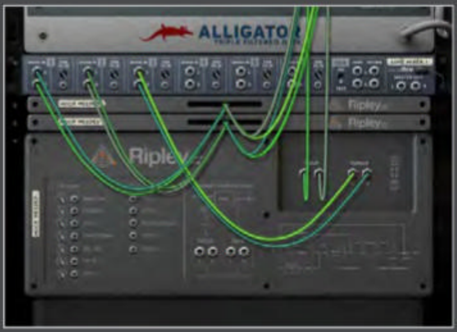
1 Sound generation

Let‘s connect a Dr. Octo Rex to the input of the Alligator. Any sound source can be fed in. It is best to move all devices into the rack by holding down the Shift key. We’ll take care of the cables ourselves. Alligator now ensures that the incoming signal is split into a Highpass, Lowpass and Bandpass using a Gate.


ALLIGATOR
Ripley
Ripley
Ripley

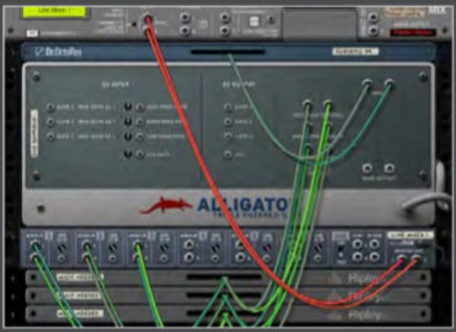
2 Three Ripleys

Three instances of the Ripley are now moved to the rack. As mentioned, please keep the Shift key pressed. We now distribute the three separate outputs from the Alligator to the inputs of our Ripleys. Always take the next cable with you when you connect up or down, this saves even more time.


ALLIGATOR
Ripley
Ripley
Ripley

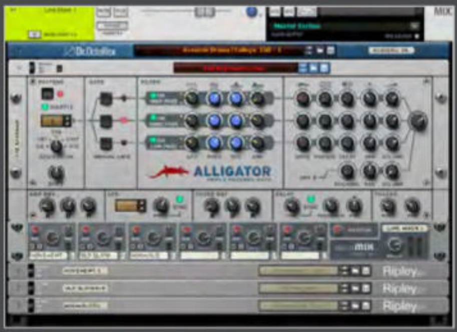
3 Mixer and outputs

Now we use a small 6:2 mixer to sum our signals. If you like, you can change the individual pannings of the three channels later to expand our example. Now our little mixer only needs one output, otherwise we won‘t hear anything.


Dr.OctoRex
ALLIGATOR
Ripley

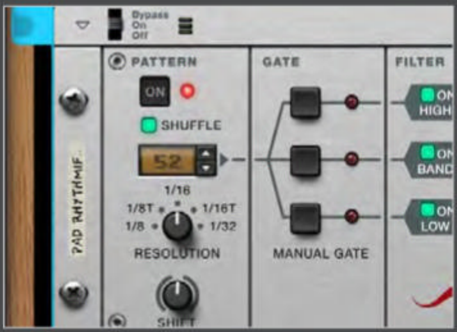
4 Mixer channel

Right-click on the Main Output of the 6:2 Mixer to create a mixer track. If you now click on “play”, you will get a first impression of what this is all about. The Alligator now divides our Dr. Octo Rex sound into three different bands using the pattern-based Gate and sends them to the Ripleys.


Dr.OctoRex
ALLIGATOR
Ripley
Ripley
Ripley

5 Patches

Now for the finishing touches. First, we choose three different patches for the Ripleys. The more different they sound and change the sound, the cooler the result will be. Have a look in the “Modulation” subfolder. You‘ll find some very exciting presets there.


Bypass
On
Off
PATTERN
ON
SHUFFLE
52
1/16
1/8T
1/16T
1/8
1/32
RESOLUTION
SHIFT
GATE
MANUAL GATE
FILTER
ON HIGH
ON BAND
ON LOW

6 Set a counterpoint

Alligator comes with 64 patterns. In our example, we are working with the number 52. Feel free to change the resolution to test faster or slower tempos. To use this method in other projects, you should now select all devices, right-click to combine them as a Combinator and save the Combinator patch!

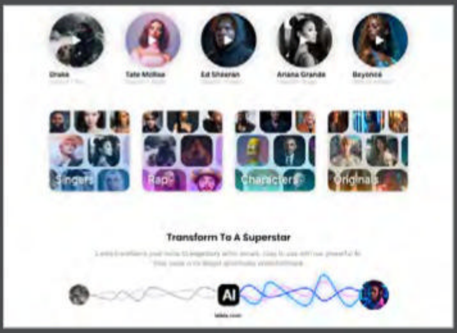
Hands-on: Vox with AI – Part 4/4

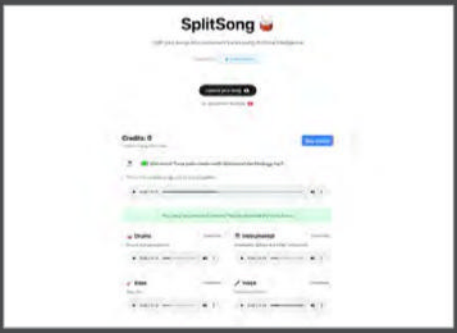
Create exclusive vocals – with AI

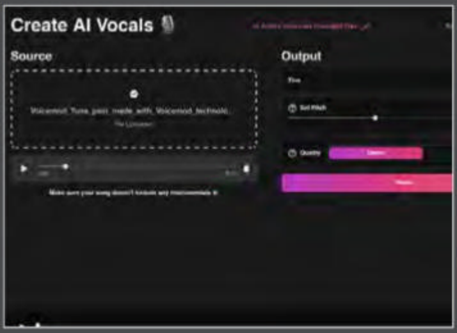
The AI can already do some impressive stuff, but is not (yet) a self-runner. With a little experimentation when writing lyrics, some tools can produce usable vocals, but they're not really great yet. Exactly: not yet. This workshop will change that! **by Marco Scherer**

Musicfy demo 1: Lila

Musicfy demo 2: Jeremiah


Drake
Tate McRae
Ed Sheeran
Ariana Grande
Beyoncé
Singers
Rap
Characters
Originals
Transform To A Superstar
AI


SplitSong
Credits: 0
Drums
Instrumental
Bass
Vocals


Create AI Vocals
Source
Output

1 Eminem as a guest?

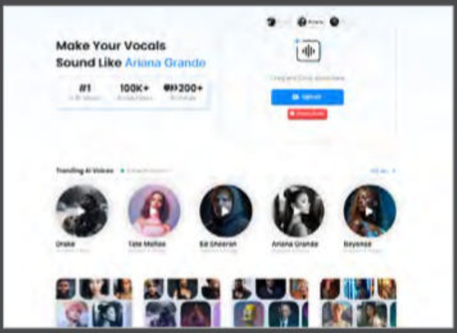
Now we'll let the pros sing for us - and that means such top-class artists as Drake, Eminem, Beyoncé, Ed Sheeran and Rihanna. In contrast to the tools previously used, they do not sing any texts, but replace the voice of existing singing. Tuna's vox or your own voice can be used as material.

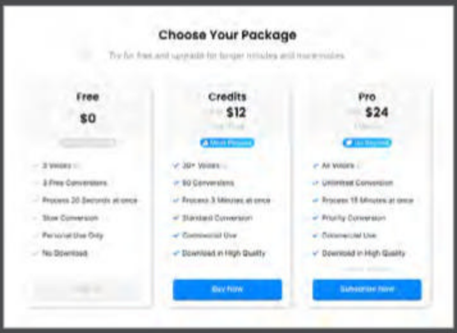
2 Where to get vocals?

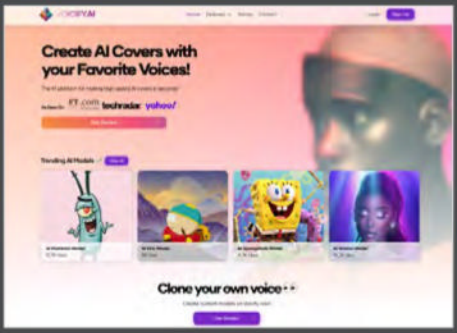
Of course, vocals and acapellas from sample providers such as Looperman [1] are also a worthwhile source of good recordings, some of which are even free of charge. They can be made exclusive with the following tools. If you want to use vocals from an existing song, you can extract them with SplitSong [2] or SpectraLayers [3].

3 Simplest technique

The technique for the professional vocals is extremely simple: visit the Musicfy [4] or Lalals [5] website, upload the audio file of the vocals (or sing directly via the browser) and select the desired AI voice. Musicfy allows you to set the pitch up to an octave higher or lower and you can choose demo or master quality.


Make Your Vocals Sound Like Ariana Grande
#1
100K+
200+
Trending AI Voices
Drake
Tate McRae
Ed Sheeran
Ariana Grande
Beyoncé


Choose Your Package
Free
$0
Credits
$12
Pro
$24
Buy Now
Subscribe Now


VOICIFYAI
Create AI Covers with your Favorite Voices!
techradar
yahoo!
Clone your own voice

4 Download

However, the latter is only available for Pro accounts. This is already the whole witchcraft, the websites spit out an audio file with the sung vocals afterwards. But speaking of pro accounts: in contrast to the tools used so far, these offers are subject to a fee if you want to use them unlimitedly and to their full extent.

5 Prices

With Lalals, three conversions are free, for $12 there are another 50, and those who need an unlimited number are in for $24 per month. Musicfy is a bit cheaper with its starter kit for $9.99 per month, but it doesn't offer the same number of prominent artists and the high-end sound is only available with pro accounts for $24.99 per month.

6 More voices?

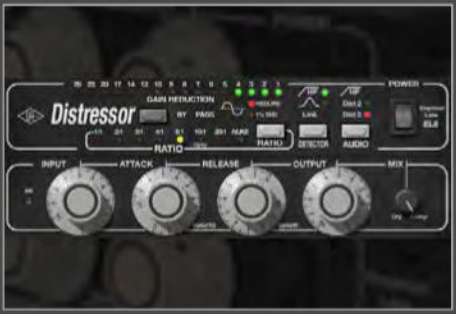
Musicfy also lets you „train“ your own voices. In most cases, all you need is an audio file with vocals, from which the service then creates a voice profile that you can transfer to other vocals. If Musicfy doesn't appeal to you, you might find an alternative with www.voicify.ai. However, both services are subject to a fee.

[1] www.looperman.com; [2] www.splitsong.com; [3] www.steinberg.net; [4] create.musicfy.lol; [5] www.lalals.com

Quick fix cheat-sheet

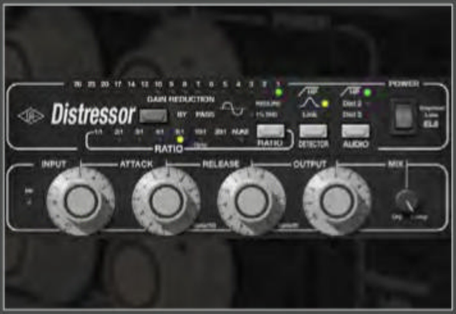
5 best-practice compressor settings

To control instruments and vocals as well as possible, a compressor is the ideal choice, although at the expense of dynamics. But what is too much and what is too little? The following settings will help you here because they provide the ideal basis for your sounds so that they sound good on their own and in context. Customization is of course welcome! **by Marco Scherer**



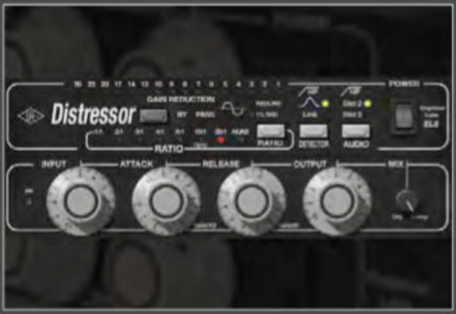
1 Acoustic drums

By nature, acoustic drums sound great in the studio - because it‘s loud - but after the recording it usually sounds more bland from the computer. That‘s why there‘s some flavor here: **Ratio 6:1** provides strong compression, **Dist 3** for saturation, **Attack 7** maintains percussive transients. Then set **INPUT to 6** or higher.



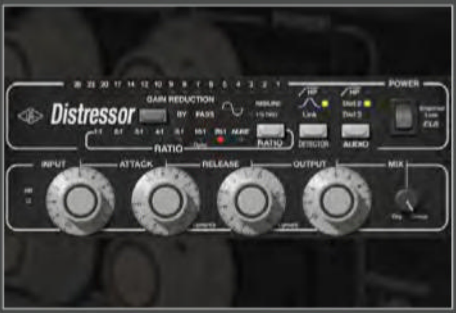
2 Vocals

As with the drums, the compression is quite crisp with a ratio of 6:1. So that “p” and “b” sounds with a high bass content don’t ruin the mix, we switch the **DETECTOR** to **HP (high pass)**. In this mode, the distresser reacts less to the low frequencies, the compression is therefore milder and avoids unnatural sound.



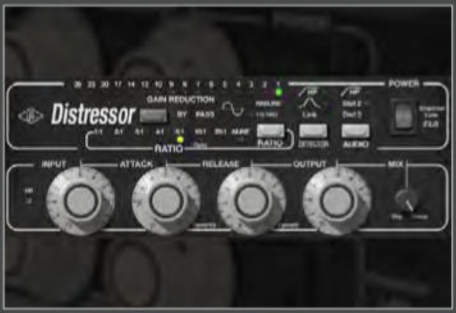
3 Bass

For bass, we definitely use the **Dist 2** mode in **AUDIO**, with which the distressor simulates tube saturation and ensures a warmer sound. So perfect for basses. **RATIO 20:1** ensures homogeneous volume with slow **ATTACK 9** and super-fast **RELEASE 0.5.** Now turn up the **INPUT** to your liking and you‘re done.



4 Guitar

For the guitar track we use the distresser in opto mode, i.e. the simulation of optical compressors like the LA-2A classic. To do this, we set **RATIO** to **10:1**, **ATTACK** to **10** and **RELEASE** to **0**. Optical compressors react more slowly and thus preserve the transients, but ensure a fat sound during compression. Ideal for guitars and percussives.



5 Synthesizer

Synth sounds are extremely diverse, so it‘s hard to give general settings here. However, a base with **RATIO 6:1, ATTACK 7** and **RELEASE 3** has proven to be effective. These are all moderate settings that can be expanded to suit any sound. For extreme applications, be sure to test the **NUKE** mode with **ATTACK and RELEASE 0**!

The Compressor legend

The Distressor from Empirical Labs is undoubtedly one of the most successful and best-selling hardware compressors in the world. Certainly not least because it can do everything – from subtle compression with a soft ratio curve to the nuke setting, which, like the LA-2A classic, mutates into a real monster. ⁘

More info

Test: zplane Peel Stems

For a long time, the ability to isolate individual elements from a stereo mix or adjust the volume ratio afterwards was mainly reserved for online services. However, plugins now also offer comparable functions that set new standards with real-time editing, intuitive operation and seamless DAW integration, such as Peel Stems from zplane. We've tested this tool.

by Sascha Blach

Features

- Real-time stem separation
- Can be inserted as a plugin
- Visualizer with color coding
- Focus EQ for refinement
- Contains all Peel functions
- VST3, AU, Standalone
- Windows and macOS: 64 Bit

Facts

Developer: zplane
Web: products.zplane.de
Distribution: Website
Price: 59 Euro

▲ Clear interface
▲ Separate tracks in real-time
▲ Low latency
▼ Sometimes severe loss of sound quality
▼ Only 4 elements can be extracted

Sound: ■■■■□□
Operation: ■■■■■■
Price/Perf: ■■■■■■

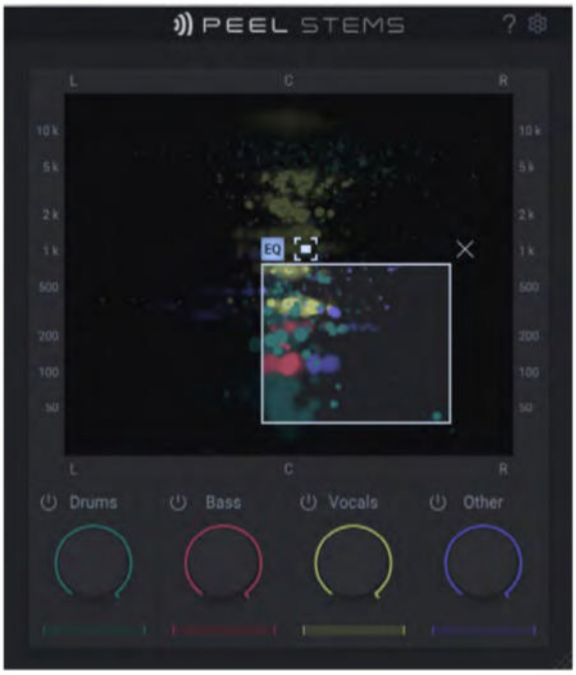
Total: ■■■■■□

Alternatives

Acon Digital Remix
49 Euro
pluginboutique.com

Simple Stems
69 Euro
pluginboutique.com

iZotope RX10 Standard
(Musical Rebalance Tool)
439 Euro
izotope.com



Real-time stem separation for Drums, Bass, Vocals and more - with intuitive interface directly in your DAW.

With Peel Stems, zplane expands its product range and introduces an addition to Peel, where the subtitle says it all, because it is a Spatial Spectral Isolator EQ. This new plugin is also based on the company's proprietary STEMS EFFICIENT technology, which can separate audio signals in real-time thanks to Spectral Analysis. This makes it possible to isolate individual elements such as instruments or vocals from a stereo audio track - for example a finished mix - or to adjust their volumes in the mix. Its application is very simple: Peel Stems is integrated into your DAW as an insert plug-in. Due to the complex processing, there is a certain amount of latency, but this is usually compensated for by your DAW. For resource-intensive projects, it is nevertheless advisable that you export the edited material to a separate track using functions such as Bounce In Place. In some DAWs, including Ableton Live, Reason, Pro Tools and Reaper, the extracted audio can even be routed directly from the plugin to a new track or bus. While Logic Pro has had its own stem separation tool since version 11, Peel Stems scores points in a direct comparison thanks to the possibility of real-time editing. In terms of sound, the two don't have much in common.

Good overview

The interface offers four main controls: Drums, bass, vocals and other. The latter includes all other instruments such as guitars or synthesizers. Here, the corresponding elements can be switched on or off and their volumes can be adjusted. In addition, a sensitivity control underneath increases the presence of the respective signal. Unfortunately, there are only these four controls, whereas remix, from Acon Digital, also offers the option of extracting a Piano, for example. The colored display - green, red, yellow and blue - in the Spectral Window provides intuitive orientation. An integrated focus EQ, which you simply drag optically into the spectral window, also allows for more precise signal processing.

Versatile application possibilities

zplane describes the application options with the terms Remove, Rebalance, Remix and Refine. Bass, Drums or Vocals, for example, can be subsequently adjusted in Mastering. Elements can be extracted or replaced for remixes and edited with effects. This plugin can also be useful for analyzing songs - for example, for listening to individual tracks. As with comparable tools, the audio quality varies depending on the source material. Peel Stems reaches its limits particularly with dense and highly compressed mixes and produces audible artifacts. The separation works best with productions that have manageable instrumentation or older songs from the 1960s to the 1980s. With complex mixes, isolated tracks can sound reminiscent to low-quality MP3s. For professional use in mastering, therefore, only minimalist volume adjustments are suitable in order not to risk any loss of quality, while the plugin delivers better results when eliminating signals for remixes.

Verdict

Peel Stems impressively demonstrates how far the technology has come: Drums, guitars and vocals can be isolated from a stereo mix or rebalanced in real-time. The user interface is extremely simple and impresses with its ease of use. The developers deserve great praise for this. As far as audio quality is concerned, one should not expect any miracles, as technical limitations still cause audible artifacts - a problem that all currently available tools of this kind have. Nevertheless, Peel Stems makes day-to-day work much easier and opens up exciting possibilities for remixing and creative audio editing - and all at an affordable price. ::

PEEL STEMS
TUTO
VST3 • A

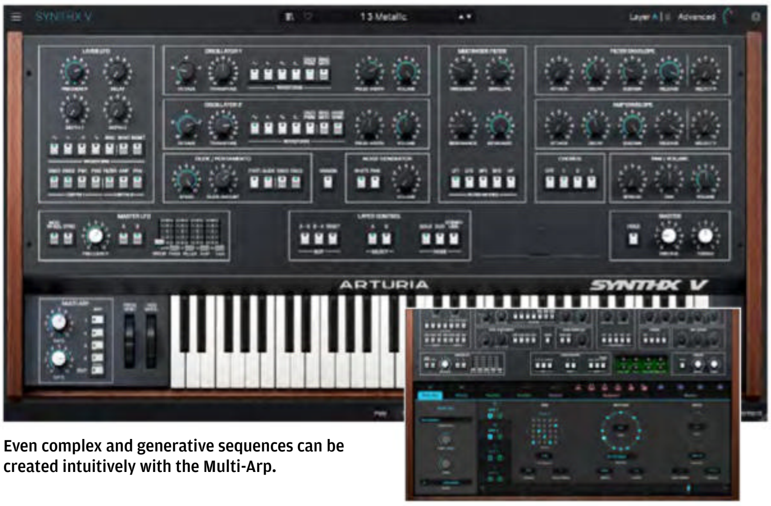
More info

Test: Arturia Synthx V

Having already successfully emulated famous flagships such as the Jupiter-8, Prophet-5 and CS-80, Arturia has now ventured into a less popular, but all the more iconic analog polysynthesizer from the 1980s. **by Jan Wilking**

The Elka Synthex didn't have it so easy when it was released, despite its extensive features for the time, because the Elka company was better known for organs up to that point; and the legendary Yamaha DX7 came onto the market only a short time later and made all analog synths look old with its transparent digital sounds.

Nowadays, of course, things are very different. Polyphonic analog synthesizers from the 80s are highly sought after and particularly rare examples, such as the Synthex, are traded at high collector's prices.


Even complex and generative sequences can be created intuitively with the Multi-Arp.

Flexible DCO & Multimode Filter

The structure of the sound generation and the user interface of the plug-in are based on the original. The basis is formed by two identically structured DCOs with the classic sawtooth, square, pulse and triangle waveforms. There is also pulse width and ring modulation and, of course, oscillator synchronization for the unmistakable sync sounds that characterize the Synthex.

Together with the noise generator, we move on to another highlight of the synthesizer, the multimode filter. In addition to a classic lowpass filter, it also offers a highpass filter and a rich-sounding bandpass mode, each with different slopes and adjustable resonance. ADSR envelopes and LFO are available for modulation.

Wide dual-layer sounds

This solid basic configuration allows for plenty of classic analog sounds, from cutting leads and crunchy basses to warm pads and extraordinary signature sounds and effects. Thanks to the dual function, you can double the result and layer two sounds. These can be completely different sounds, for example, a metallic lead sound underlaid with PWM strings. Or you can use the same sound settings for both layers and distribute them left-right in the stereo panorama for super-wide and broad sounds. Individually adjustable fluctuations in parameters such as filter, pitch and envelope ensure slight deviations between the two layer sounds, just like the original, which is why the whole thing sounds very lively.

Multi-Arp for complex sequences

That would already be a solid feature set for a soft synth, but Arturia really steps up its game in the lower advanced range. Instead of the rather simple step sequencer of the original, there is a complex multiarp. Here, you can separately set the order and rhythm in which the chords played should be broken up. Four of these arps can be used together and distributed between the two layers, as required. This makes it easy to create even complex polyrhythms.

If that's not enough for you, you'll also find various modulators in the lower section. The step sequencer can modulate various sound parameters in sync with the tempo, while the shaper can be used to create complex waveforms and Random provides random values - all three can be used simultaneously and in parallel with the Multi-Arp, if required!

And finally, there are plenty of Effects. In addition to the emulation of an analog BBD Chorus, whose two variations can be activated directly via the synthesizer interface, you will find four more slots in the effects area. Here, you have access to a whole host of high-quality effects that have already proven themselves in other Arturia synthesizers and the FX Collection.

Verdict

There are already some very good emulations of analog polyphonic synthesizers on the market. And even if the Synthex has its own characteristic sound, this alone would not have made the Synthx V a recommendation. It is the combination of dual layer sounds and the inspiring multi-arp, garnished with the modulators and effects, that makes the Synthx V so appealing. Anyone who likes classic analog sounds in the style of Jean-Michel Jarre and the like, as well as complex arpeggios and atmospheric modulations, should definitely give Synthx V a try.

Synthx V
TUTORIAL
Software Overview
More info

Features

- Software synthesizer
- Emulation of Elka Synthex
- Up to 16 voices
- Dual layer
- Multimode filter
- Multi-Arp
- Modulators
- 4 FX slots
- VST2, AU, AAX, Standalone
- Windows and macOS: 64 Bit

Facts

Developer: Arturia
Web: arturia.com
Distribution: Tomeso
Price: 119 Euro

- ▲ Characteristic sound
- ▲ Dual layer
- ▲ Multi-Arp
- ▲ Flexible modulators
- ▲ MPE/Poly-AT
- ▲ High-quality effects

Sound:	■■■■■◧
Operation:	■■■■■◧
Price/Perf:	■■■■■□
Total:	■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Cherry Audio Elka-X
49 Euro
cherryaudio.com

Softube Model 77
79 Euro
softube.com

UVI Synth Anthology 4
149 Euro
uvi.net

Test: Steinberg Cubase Pro 14

35 years of experience have gone into Cubase, the DAW for recording, mixing and composing. Does a DAW that has long offered everything still need an update? Cubase 14 shows that there is always room for fresh ideas and improvements - with new modulators, drum track, pattern sequencer and inspiring effects. by Vera Schumacher

Features

- DAW for composition, recording, editing, mixing
- Unlimited audio, MIDI and instrument tracks
- 6 virtual instruments
- Huge range of audio and MIDI effects
- Drum machine
- 6 Modulators
- 4 new effects
- Windows & MacOS: 64 Bit
- Version: 14.0.10

Facts

Developer: Steinberg
Web: www.steinberg.net
Price: Cubase Pro 14: 579 Euro, Artist 14: 329 Euro, Elements 14: 100 Euro

▲ Successful modulators
▲ Powerful new drum track
▲ Flexible pattern sequencer
▲ Inspirational effects
▲ New note editor
▲ DAWproject support
▲ High ease of use
▲ More efficient and stable
▼ No undo in the pattern editor
▼ No hardware control with modulators

Sound: ■■■■■◧
Operation: ■■■■■◧
Price/Perf: ■■■■■◧

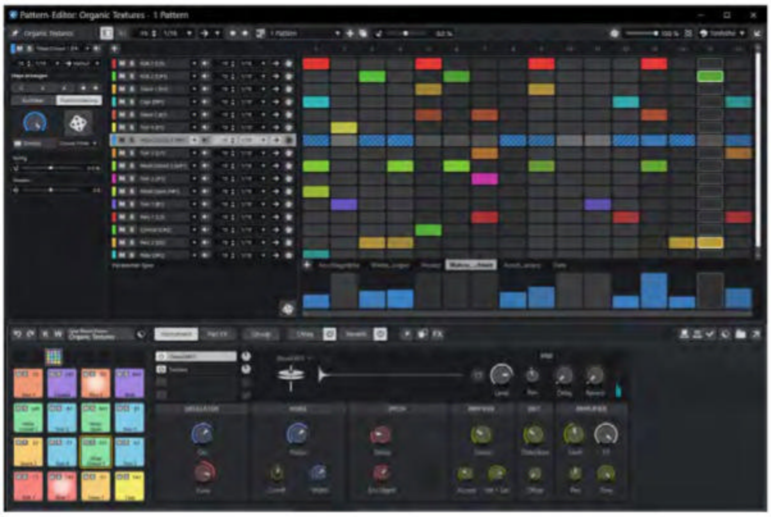
Total: ■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Studio One Pro 7
200 Euro
www.presonus.com

Ableton Live 12 Suite
599 Euro
www.ableton.com

Bitwig Studio
399 Euro
www.bitwig.com



It rocks! The new Drum Track offers seven drum types such as kick, snare, clap and sample, each with up to eight models based on virtual analog and FM synthesis.

As usual, Cubase is available in three versions - Pro, Artist and Elements [1] - so that both professionals and beginners will get their money's worth. The video engine, MediaBay, Mix Console, Control Room and Supervision have been revised. The key editor, the selection area tool and the ruler track also benefit from improvements. The mix console can now also be displayed in the lower zone, whereby channels can be rearranged using drag & drop. New event volume curves allow precise volume adjustments, while the Volume Plug-in controls levels independently of the fader. It's also great that Cubase 14 now supports the DAWproject format for project exchange with other DAWs. The 64-bit project format makes it possible to save larger and more complex projects.

Modular feeling in your DAW

One of the most exciting new features in Cubase 14 is the modulators, which allow you to control almost every parameter of VST3 instruments and effects, as well as channel settings. Six modulators such as LFO, envelope follower, shaper, step modulator, macro knob and mod scripter can be freely combined in eight slots. Everything is possible, from subtle movements to wild sound progressions. It's just a shame that the LFO rates don't extend into the audio range. Modulators can also influence each other, such as an LFO influencing the rate of a step sequencer, for example. Great: The shaper allows you to draw your own modulation curves and the Envelope Follower can use sidechain signals, for example, to animate filter frequencies in the beat rhythm. The ModScripter even allows you to create your own modulators via JavaScript. A few scripts, such as for random sound variations, are already included and users share their own creations in the Steinberg Forum.

Fat beats for every genre

A highlight of Cubase Pro 14 is the Drum Track, which allows you to create your own drum and percussion sounds. Eight pages with 16 pads each offer space for sounds, and you can layer up to four internal synth sounds and samples per pad. The spectrum ranges from classic drum sounds to experimental FM sounds. High-quality effects provide an assertive, distinctive sound and the included kits are inspiring. The drum track is perfectly complemented by the pattern sequencer, in which you can quickly program beats and melodic sequences. A euclidean and a random generator create varied grooves; and parameters such as velocity, repetitions and probability can be precisely controlled.

Fans of atmospheric sounds will be delighted with the Shimmer plug-in, a reverb effect with a pitch shifter in the feedback loop. The studio delay combines delays with modulation, distortion, pitch and reverb - ideal for experimental effects. Rhythmized filter and wah effects are child's play with the auto filter, especially when controlled with the new modulators. The multimode filter integrates an envelope follower, which can also react to external signals thanks to the sidechain input. The quartet is rounded off by underwater, which muffles your music as if it were coming from inside the neighborhood club.

Verdict

Cubase Pro 14 is an update that packs a punch. The modulators, the drum track with pattern sequencer and the new effects provide many reasons to invest in the new version. Numerous detailed improvements make the DAW more convenient, efficient and stable. Further plus points are awarded for the support of the DAWproject format and its improved performance. If you're thinking about switching or buying your first DAW, Cubase Pro 14 is one of the most powerful solutions for recording, mixing and composing that can provide lasting inspiration.

More Info

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[1] www.steinberg.net/de/cubase/compare-editions

Test: Cherry Audio P-10

Cherry Audio has been one of the most active developers of software synthesizers for years. Their latest sound generator is the P-10, a replica of the legendary Sequential Prophet 10. **by Jan Wilking**

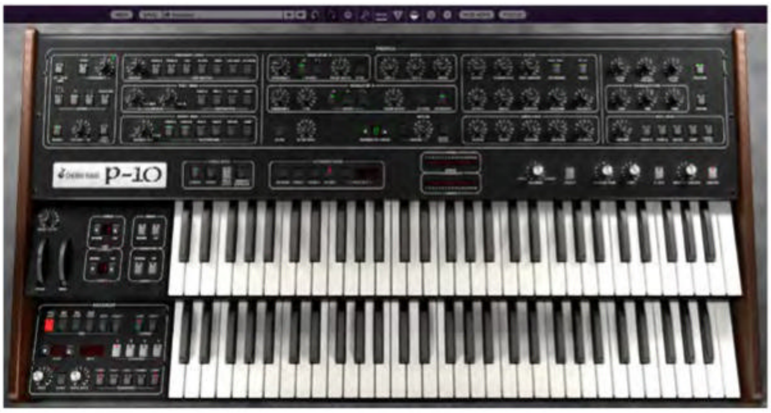
There are already several software emulations of the polyphonic synthesizer classic, and u-he Repro-5 and Softube Model-80 are very close to the original in terms of sound. Based on our previous experience with Cherry Audio, we had expected that the P-10 would not be able to keep up in terms of sound and would, instead, only score points with its features and price. However, we were pleasantly surprised the first time we played it, because the P-10 captures the popular Prophet sound really well and, when reprogramming sounds from the competitors mentioned above, it was almost impossible to hear any significant differences in the blind test. This also applies to critical areas such as high filter resonance or modulation in the audio range - Cherry Audio has done a really good job here!

Graphically not so good, unfortunately

We didn't like the unnecessarily large pseudo 3D interface, where 2/3 of the space is taken up by the virtual keyboard. While two keyboards on top of each other can make sense with hardware, nobody needs that with a soft synth. The keyboards can be folded, but then you don't have access to transposition and the sequencer. The more important view with effects and arpeggiator, on the other hand, is only available as an alternative to the sound parameters, which we would have preferred to have folded out, like on the Arturia Prophet-V, for example. The scalability of the interface and the Undo and Redo functions deserve praise.

Double Prophet-5

The basic sound generation of the Prophet should be familiar. Like the original, the P-10 is a real sweet spot synthesizer - no matter what you tweak, it always sounds good. With Sync and FM, however, you can also create more oblique sounds; in this respect, the Prophet is much more flexible than a Roland Juno, for example. The P-10 even doubles the fun, because you can create two different sounds and play them simultaneously, either spread across the keyboard or layered on top of each other. Each of the two layers can be distributed in the panorama for wide stereo sounds and the effects can also be adjusted individually for each layer. You can also freely choose which of the two sounds should be triggered by the arpeggiator or sequencer. This makes it possible to create more complex combination sounds that would not be possible with a pure Prophet 5 clone.



P-10 also has an extensive Effects Section with its own LFO.

Unfortunately, we have not found a way to edit both sounds at the same time, for example, to lower the filter frequency of both sounds together in a stereo layer with just one control.

Polyphonic Sequencer, Arpeggiator and Effects

The polyphonic Sequencer impressed us with its intuitive operation: simply enter the sequence note by note and then either let it run automatically to the song or trigger and transpose it using the keyboard. Four sequences of up to 128 steps each can be saved per patch and switched directly.

The effects section also has it all. Distortion, phaser, chorus/flanger, delay and reverb are available, all of which can be activated in parallel, if desired. The effects will be familiar from other Cherry Audio products and they are really good. In particular, the tape delay and the Galaxy Reverb, which is reminiscent of the popular Strymon Big Sky, complement the Prophet sound perfectly. The most important effect parameters can be modulated via aftertouch or a dedicated FX LFO, making them a dynamic part of the sound generation - great!

Verdict

Do you need another Prophet emulation in your plug-in folder? We say yes, because both the sound and the features of the P-10 are impressive. The legendary sound of the sweetspot classic can be heard without question, but with two layers of 16 voices each at a moderate CPU load, P-10 offers more than the original or the direct competition. In addition, there is an intuitive, directly operable Sequencer as well as a sophisticated, dynamically modulatable and very good sounding effects section. The only thing we find less successful is the visual implementation, but this is manageable considering the low price. ⁘

More info

Features

- Synthesizer plug-in
- Prophet-10 emulation
- 2 VCO, lowpass filter
- Multimode filter
- Poly-Mod with FM
- Stereo layer
- 2x16-voice
- Multi-effect with LFO
- VST3, AU, AAX, Standalone
- Windows and macOS: 64 Bit

Facts

Developer: Cherry Audio
Web: cherryaudio.com
Distrib: Website
Price: $59 US Dollars

▲ Sound character well met
▲ Split/layer, stereo
▲ 2x16-voice
▲ Modulable effects
▲ Step-sequenzer
▲ Favorable price
▼ Graphic design of the user interface

Sound:	■■■■■◧
Operation:	■■■■■□
Price/Perf:	■■■■■■
Total:	■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Arturia Prophet-5 V
149 Euro
arturia.com

U-he Repro-5
149 Euro
u-he.com

Softube Model-80
159 Euro
softube.com

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www.initialaudio.com **Gift ID:** F1495

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OSCILLATOR 2
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PAN
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V8 UNISON
VEL
ATTACK
FREQ
RESONANCE
DEPTH
VELOCITY
BALANCE

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www.uvi.net **Gift ID:** F1493

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www.tal-software.com **Gift ID:** F905

no additional costs

* Only while stocks last. Software is delivered as a download with a serial number.

Presets and audio demos in the magazine downloads (see page 9)

Hands-on: Recreate Top-Ten Sounds

Dope tracks

Audio demo
The Weeknd

Audio demo
Alle Farben

The desire to have that ONE sound at home, that one track that you can‘t get out of your ear, unites us as Producers. Listen once, turn the knobs, done. But transferring what you‘ve heard to the right parameters with the right values takes training. Every month on Dope Tracks, we present two sounds from the latest hot songs - this month “Call My Name” (featuring Sofiloud) by Alle Farben and “Dancing in the Flames” by The Weeknd.

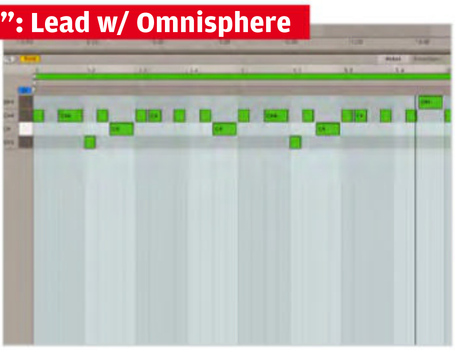
by Julian Schmauch

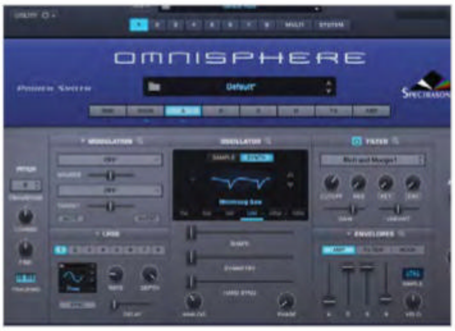
Project info:

Material: DAW, diverse Plug-ins
Time required: 1 – 2 hours
Content: Reconstruct the sounds of popular Pop & EDM tracks.
Difficulty: Advanced to Pro

The Weeknd – „Dancing in the Flames”: Lead w/ Omnisphere

THE WEEKND
Dancing In The Flames




OMNISPHERE
Default
Spectrasonics

1 Four billion

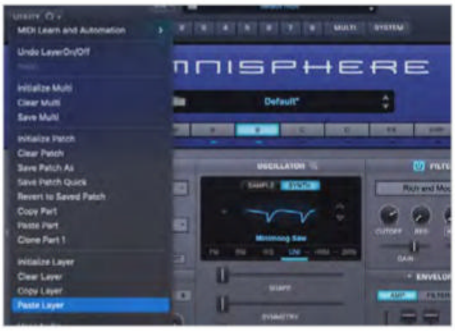
...clicks on Spotify for “Blinding Lights” by The Weeknd, more than any other song. And anyone who has heard the song, which was released in 2020, will never get rid of the synth melody. For “Dancing in the Flames”, Abel Tesfaye, the mastermind behind the project, has once again teamed up with uber-songwriter Max Martin using a similar recipe.

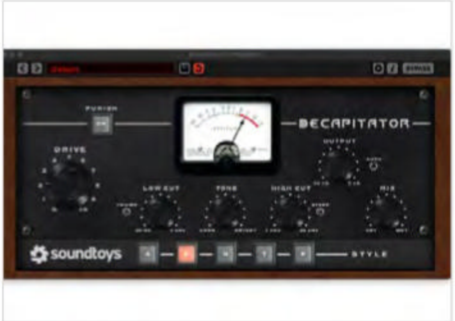
2 Dark Pop from 1984

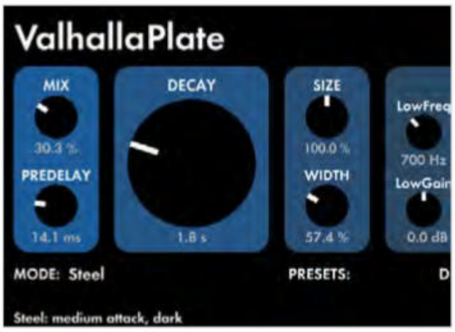
Pushing Dark Wave beat, spherical vocals strongly reminiscent of Michael Jackson and synthesizers, so many synthesizers. But the lead melody, which we are recreating here, stands out from the arrangement. Not quite as catchy as that of “Blinding Lights”, its staccato rhythm at 118 bpm is a lot more driving than the original.

3 Omni Lead

We recreate the sound in Omnisphere. The vibe is analog, in the direction of Moog, Juno or Prophet. The plug-in provides suitable sounds for this. Set the **Minimoog Saw** waveform for Layer A, **Rich and Moogie1** for the filter and the **Cutoff** to about **6 kHz**. For the envelope, set **Attack** to 0, **Decay** to 20, **Sustain** to 0 and **Release** to 0.03.


MIDI Learn and Automation
Undo Layer On/Off
Initialize Multi
Clear Multi
Save Multi
Initialize Patch
Clear Patch
Save Patch As
Save Patch Quick
Revert to Saved Patch
Copy Part
Paste Part
Clone Part 1
Initialize Layer
Clear Layer
Copy Layer
Paste Layer
OMNISPHERE
Default


DECAPITATOR
PUNISH
DRIVE
OUTPUT
LOW CUT
TONE
HIGH CUT
MIX
soundtoys
STYLE


ValhallaPlate
MIX
30.3 %
DECAY
1.8 s
SIZE
100.0 %
LowFreq
700 Hz
PREDELAY
14.1 ms
WIDTH
57.4 %
LowGain
0.0 dB
MODE: Steel
PRESETS:
Steel: medium attack, dark

4 Unison and Layer B

Now go to the **Unison** Section of **Layer 1**, turn **Depth** to 0.57, **Detune** to 0.11 and **Analog** at the bottom left to 0.4 to make the sound wider. Copy the entire layer from the Utility Menu via **Copy Layer** at the top and paste it back into Layer B via paste layer. Set **Pitch** to **+12** on the left and **Amp** to 0.75 on the right.

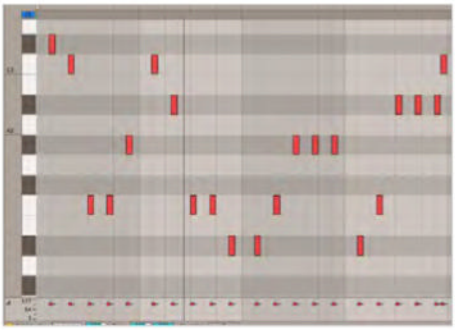
5 Decapitator series

Now set the preset to monophonic mode. This is done in the main view on the right with the solo button. Then, Soundtoys Decapitator comes next. The distortion plugin adds analog warmth and pressure to the synth sound - in E mode (emulates an EMI preamp) with **Drive** set to a maximum of 2 or 3.

6 Plate Reverb

Epic 80s Reverb comes either from the legendary series of Lexicon Reverbs 224 and 480 or from a plate reverb. The Valhalla-Plate is ideal for this. This tool simply sounds good without the need for much fine-tuning. Make sure that the **Decay** Time isn‘t set too long so that the signal doesn‘t get muddy.

Alle Farben – „Call my Name“ (featuring Sofiloud): Pluck w/ Phase Plant



1 Franz Zimmer

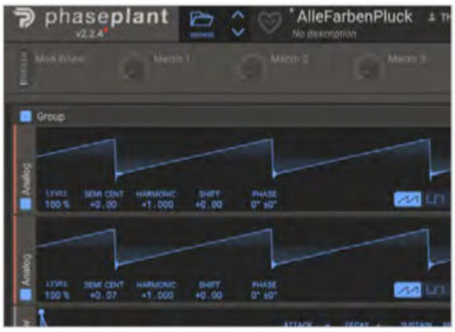
.... has achieved pretty much everything in the 15 years that he has been performing, releasing and performing under the alias Alle Farben. Chart positions, gigantic festival stages, millions of records sold... But a driven artist like Franz doesn‘t stand still. Electroswing is over. With “Call My Name”, he is moving in the direction of Club music.

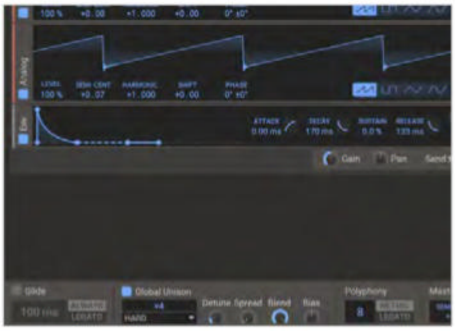
2 Sofiloud

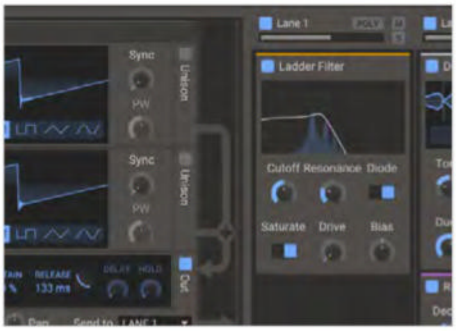
Franz Zimmer co-wrote the single, which was released in September 2024, with Norwegian songwriter Sofiloud. She has already immortalized her soulful vocals on tracks by EDM greats such as Alan Walker, Topic and Sam Feldt. The new Club sound of Alle Farben‘s track was a perfect match for Sofiloud‘s melancholy voice!

3 Pluck or Lead

As the vocals are clearly in the foreground of the track, you can‘t really speak of a lead synth here; it’s more a pluck sound that is rhythmically distributed around the vocals. In typical EDM fashion, the rhythm of the pluck synth is slightly shifted and kept in a sad B flat minor to match the rather gloomy lyrics.


phaseplant
v2.2.4
AlleFarbenPluck
No description
Group
Analog
LEVEL 100 %
SEMI CENT +0.00
HARMONIC ×1.000
SHIFT +0.00
PHASE 0° ±0°
Analog
LEVEL 100 %
SEMI CENT +0.07
HARMONIC ×1.000
SHIFT +0.00
PHASE 0° ±0°


ATTACK 0.00 ms
DECAY 170 ms
SUSTAIN 0.0 %
RELEASE 133 ms
Global Unison
HARD
Polyphony


Lane 1
Ladder Filter
Cutoff
Resonance
Diode
Saturate
Drive
Bias

4 Phase Plant

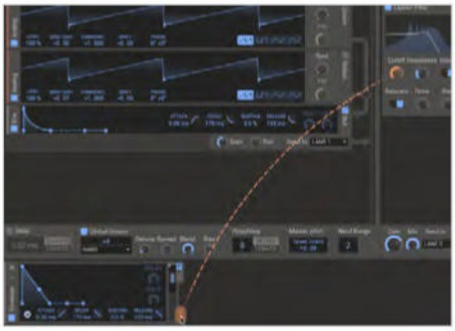
It‘s finally time for Phase Plant again! In the modulation monster from Kilohearts, load your analog oscillator module, the **Saw Wave** fits as a starting point. Load a second analog oscillator directly in the same module. Detune it slightly at **Semi Cent** to 0.07 - a beat is created, the sound sounds broader and more epic.

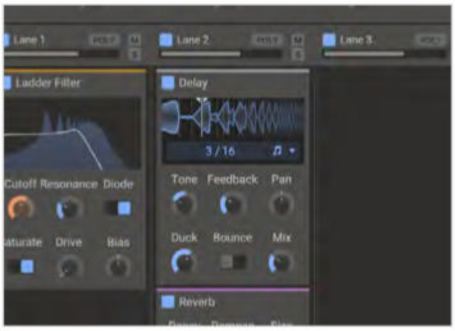
5 Pluck Env

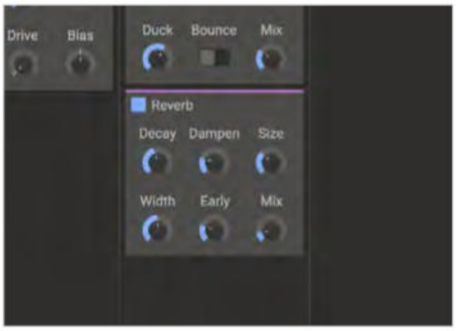
The most important ingredient in plucks: the crisp, short envelope. You set it directly in the oscillator module: **Attack** to 0 ms, **Decay** to 170 ms, **Sustain** to 0.0 percent and release to 133 ms. This makes the patch sound very “plucked” like a stringed instrument. For even more width, activate Global **Unison** in **Hard** Mode below.

6 Ladder filter

Unusually, the filter now appears in Phase Plant not on the left under the analog oscillators, but on the right in the first effect lane. There, you load **Ladder Filter**, a gently attenuating Moog filter emulation, set the **Cutoff** to 570 Hz and **Resonance** to 26 percent, and activate **Diode**. The only thing missing is the filter envelope.




Lane 1
Lane 2
Lane 3
Ladder Filter
Cutoff
Resonance
Diode
Saturate
Drive
Bias
Delay
3 / 16
Tone
Feedback
Pan
Duck
Bounce
Mix
Reverb


Drive
Bias
Duck
Bounce
Mix
Reverb
Decay
Dampen
Size
Width
Early
Mix

7 Modulation Env

You can download them below in Phase Plant: Envelope. Set the envelope module as follows: **Attack** to 0 ms, **Decay** to 170 ms, **Sustain** to 0.0 and **Release** to 100 ms. Now connect the modulation output of the module to the **Cutoff** in the Ladder filter. Now set the modulation intensity to 30 percent while holding down and dragging up the mouse pointer.

8 Dotted echo

In the **Effect Lane 2** plug-in, load the delay integrated in Phase Plant, set it to sync (next to the delay speed) and then to 3 / 16. Also, turn **Duck** to 60 percent so that the Delay Signal can only be heard when the synth is not playing. This keeps the sound more defined, and the mix component should also be set to a maximum of 30 percent.

9 Small reverb

The reverb is still missing for that epic, stadium-like sound. You can get this from the reverb module in Phase Plant. Load this directly in effect lane 2 under the delay to keep things clear. **Decay** is set to 3.00 seconds, Size to 80 percent and the mix control to a narrow 13 percent. Too much would blur the jagged pluck sound.

Zampler plug-in, soundset, audio demo and MIDI files: Download see Page 9

Zampler & MPC Expansion: Synth Classics II

Hands-on: Tech House

Whether you produce Synthwave, Techno, House, Electro, Trance, EBM or Ambient - with Synth Classic II, you get cult sounds that enhance every genre. Our brand new sound bank for Zampler and Akai's MPC series features 79 powerful basses, multi-faceted lead and synth sounds, as well as shimmering pads. In our workshop, we'll show you that they're perfect for Tech House tracks.

by Mario Schumacher

Beat
ZAMPLER//RX
FILTER
OUTPUT
MOD ENVELOPE
FILTER ENVELOPE
AMP ENVELOPE
LFO 1
EFFECTS
SYNAPSE
BEAT PLATINUM SELECTION
SYNTH CLASSICS 2
79 MEATY BASSES, AIRY LEADS & INSPIRING CHORDS
MPC EXPANSION
Win
Mac
VST + AU

002: BS DX7 Bright Bow

PATCH COMMENTS
BEAT magazine // patch by Marco Scherer

PATCH SETTINGS
Polyph.: 12
GLOBAL SETTINGS
Bend up: 2 Bend down: 2

SYNTH CLASSICS II

Synth Classics II takes you on a journey back to the golden era of hardware gear: 79 presets bring the powerful flair of legends like the Sequential Circuit Prophet, Odyssey, ARP2600, Oberheim SEM and Novation's all-time classic Bass Station directly into your studio - accompanied by bonus patches from Peak and the compact Prophet clone Toraiz AS-1. Try it out now!

www.zamplersounds.com

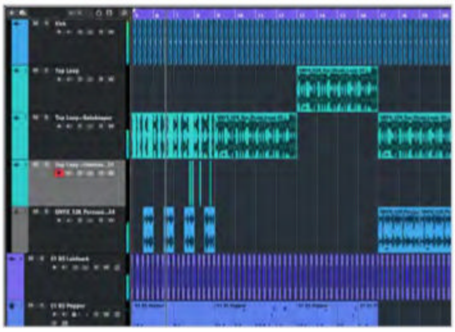
Facts

Synth Classics II for Zampler:

- ▲ 2 GB Soundbank
- ▲ 79 powerful basses, airy leads and inspiring chords
- ▲ 25 basses
- ▲ 27 leads
- ▲ 12 pads
- ▲ 1,027 samples

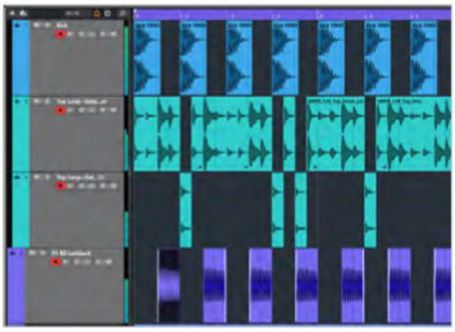
Synth Classics II for Akai MPCs:

- ▲ 1 GB Expansion
- ▲ 79 powerful basses, airy leads and inspiring chords
- ▲ 25 basses
- ▲ 12 leads
- ▲ 11 synths and 4 FX
- ▲ 395 samples
- ▲ Compatible with Akai MPC One, X, Live, Live mkII, Force, Studio, Touch, Renaissance, Key 61, MPC Software & MPC Beats



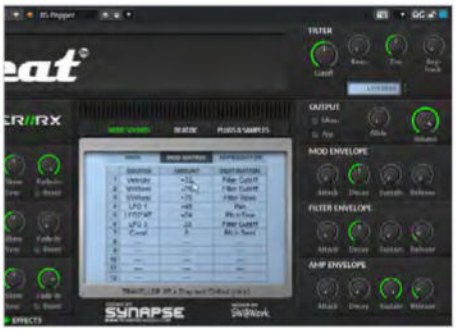
1 Techno beat

Since the beat is the most important element in Tech House, we start with it. We arm ourselves with a few drums and beats from the Lopcloud [1] and build up a rhythmic foundation at 128 BPM. The beat is straightforward, with the bass drum on every quarter note. Now we want to add a muffled off-beat bass to the drums.



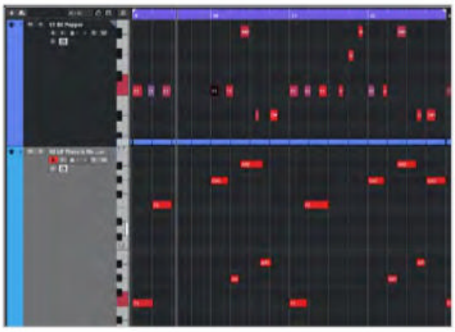
2 Off-beat bass

To do this, load the sample **BS Laidback-000-040-e1** onto an audio track from the folder in which you‘ve installed Synth Classics II. We adjust the sample start so that the sound starts softly and place it on every second eighth note. Voxengo Tube Amp [2] makes the bass sound more assertive with a subtle tube saturation.



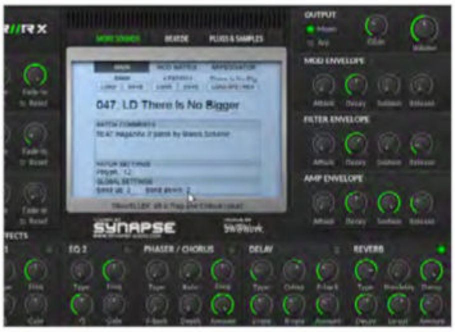
3 Funky bass

Basslines in Tech House can be a little more rhythmic and funkier than in Techno. Synth Classics II has the right basses for this purpose. Load Zampler//RX and click on **Load Bank**. Then, select “Zampler Synth Classics II” and switch to preset 021: **BS Popper**. First, deactivate the arpeggiator and **Mono** Mode.



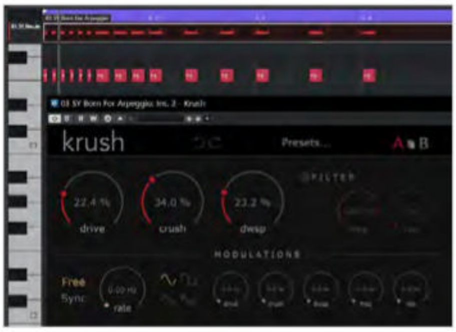
4 Bassline

Switch off the **Delay** effect and adjust the filter parameters and the associated envelope as shown in the previous image. We adjust the first assignment in the modulation matrix as shown. Play a groovy and syncopated bassline with the bass, but it shouldn‘t be too complex. The velocity controls the filter frequency.



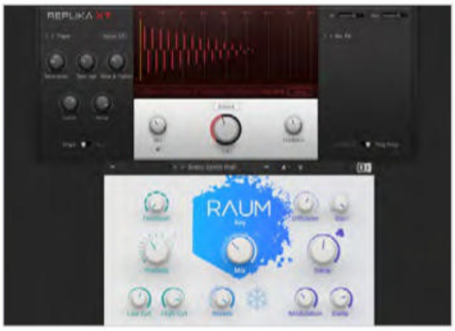
5 Unison lead

What would be a better addition than a Unison Lead like preset **047: LD There Is No Bigger**? Deactivate the delay effect on this one, activate mono mode and turn glide to 33%. Set **Bend up** and **Bend down** to 3 and then adjust the reverb effect as shown. Now you can play a sequence with 4 tied notes and bends.



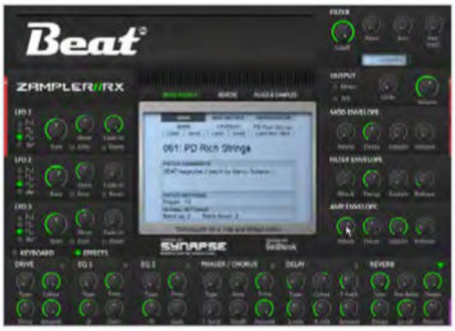
6 Rolling synth

Rolling synth sounds are also popular in Tech House. For this, we use preset **067: SY Born For Arpeggio**, which plays the sequence of notes shown. Deactivate the arpeggiator and the effects and set **Cutoff** and **Env** to 50 % each and **Filter Decay** to 54 %. The bitcrusher Tritik Krush **[3]** provides a snappier sound.



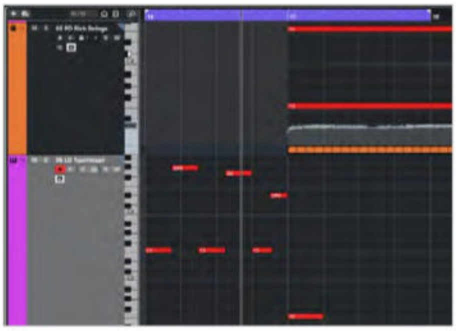
7 Technoid accents

To make the sound more spatial, we use NI Replika XT for a Stereo Delay with a dotted eighth note Delay Time and add some reverb with NI Room **[4]**. You can set further accents with Technoid, chopped up Lead and Pad sounds, for which the presets **038: LD Psycedemic**, **049: LD Tuuriicaan** and **029: LD Enforcer** are suitable, for example.



8 Pad in the background

You can achieve the desired sound with the rhythmic multi-effect, DS Audio Tantra 2 **[5]**. chords and pads tend to be used sparingly in Tech House, but we still don‘t want to miss the opportunity to smuggle a pad sound into the track with **061: PD Rich Strings**. Increase the amount value in the fifth row of the matrix to **+38**.



9 Massive lead sequence

Adjust the Amp Envelope as shown in the previous step. Use aftertouch to give the sound a distinctive vibrato. How about a massive lead sequence at the end? Preset **049: LD Tuuriicaan** is predestined for this. Activate the mono mode and set glide to 27 % to spice up your lead lines with Technoid Portamentos.

[1] www.loopcloud.com; [2] www.voxengo.com; [3] www.tritik.com; www.native-instruments.com; [5] www.dmitrysches.com

Test: Intech Grid Controller

A young company from Budapest is currently revolutionizing the MIDI controller scene. We are talking about Intech Studio and the Grid controllers, which are used for music production, DJ'ing, live performances, as well as for film editing and other applications. **by Heiner Kruse**

Features

- Compact USB-MIDI controller
- Various models can be combined
- Up to 8 controllers simultaneously
- Functions customizable via editor
- Multi-beam LED lights
- Dimensions: 106mm x 106mm large

Facts

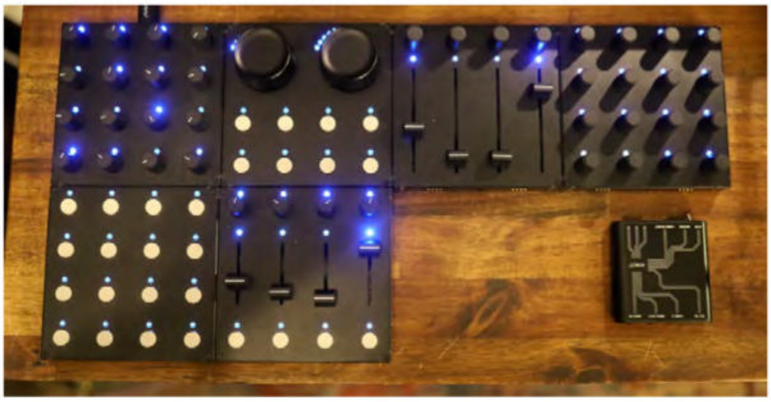
Manuf: Intech Studio
Web: intech.studio
Distribution: Website
Price: PO16 139 Euro; PBF 4 139 Euro; EF44 139 Euro; EN16 179 Euro; Knot 105 Euro; BU 16 129 Euro; TEK2 with Jogwheels 239 Euro

▲ Many controller functions in a small space
▲ Extensive configuration options
▲ Detailed programmability
▲ High-quality production
▼ Complex editor

Workmanship: ■■■■■■
Operation: ■■■■■□
Price/Perf: ■■■■■□
Total: ■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Faderfox EC4
349 Euro
faderfox.de



The Intech controllers are easy to combine and are available in a wide variety of designs.

Intech Studio's Grid models are solidly built, neutral black square controllers that can be connected to each other via neodymium magnets. They are available in different versions with buttons, jog wheels, endless encoders (with push option), pots and faders designed for different applications. You can combine the different models into a single large controller to suit your personal needs and purposes.

Basic operation

The grid controllers are connected via a USB-C cable, which can supply up to eight additional controllers with power. A utility button allows you to switch between four modes, which are always switched simultaneously for all connected modules by LEDs that light up blue, orange, green or violet. Preconfigured, different MIDI data is sent in each mode. An example: I find the EN16 controller with 16 push endless encoders and 16 associated LEDs particularly practical. These transmit preset MIDI CC 32-47 on channels 1, 2, 3 or 4, depending on the mode set. In applications that work with MIDI controllers, you can easily assign them to different remote-controlled functions. When the encoders are pressed, MIDI notes (from G#0 to B1) are sent on the four alternative channels by default.

Editor

Things get a little more complex if you want to change the controller data sent. For example, if you want the controller to send on channel 1 in all modes, but always send other MIDI CC commands, you will need to work with the free downloadable grid editor software to create this configuration. However, the editor is a fully-fledged programming tool. You can also carry out firmware updates here.

Endless encoders have a push function, which results in the „Push Rotate" operating mode, for example. This means that the encoder can send a different MIDI command when it is pressed during rotation than when it is not. You can also find preset configurations from the manufacturer or other users in the editor - or save your own. You can even find programmed internal LFOs here, whose rate and intensity can then be set using the encoders, for example. The support team was even able to fulfill my requests for slight changes to the assignment.

Models and practice

In addition to the EN16 controller mentioned above, there are many other models: TEK2 comes with two endless jog wheels (set values can be read on LED wreaths) and eight buttons. This controller is interesting not least of all for DJ-ing applications. But I can also imagine using it for sample and video editing if it is possible to assign scrubbing functions via MIDI. PBF4 has four faders, four buttons and four pots - this configuration could also be suitable for live acts or DJ setups. EF 44 offers four faders plus a push encoder. BU16 has 16 buttons and toggle options, for example, for clip launching. Overlays for using BU16 and EN16 with DaVinci Resolve video editing software are available on the Intech website. PO16 has 16 pots with a marker for the set value. The various control elements are called "Elements" in the language of the Editor - and each has its own LED. The individual controller of your dreams can be built by combining the individual modules with each other.

Verdict

Intech Studio Grid Controllers can make life easier for musicians in many studios and setups, whether using hardware or software. After all, there are many synthesizers, effects and other devices where not all functions can be accessed directly. The grid controllers offer very flexible solutions and configurations. A complex grid editor software can also be used to carry out detailed programming - even including integrated LFOs. The connection is child's play via USB. You can also use the Knot tool to control MIDI devices without a computer. However, the grid controller is also very interesting for video editing.

More Info

Test: Elektron Digitone II

Now that the sample-based Digitakt has already been given a complete overhaul, version 2 of the Digitone synthesizer is of course following. Find out what the groovebox with FM synthesis can do more or better in version 2 in our test.

by Jan Wilking

Almost unchanged on the outside, Digitone II now offers 16 tracks with which you can control the internal sound generation or external MIDI devices. Four machines cover specialized forms of FM synthesis and also subtractive synthesis. FM drums, basses and polyphonic synth tracks can be mixed here, combined with the proven flexible Elektron sequencer, which has been expanded to 8 bars, and this promises a lot of Groovbox fun!

16 tracks

With the first Digitone, you had to make do with eight tracks, four of which were assigned to the internal sound generator. The other four tracks were pure MIDI tracks for controlling external sound generators. This meant that the Digitone was only partially suitable as a control center in a hardware setup. Digitone II multiplies the possibilities. It offers 16 tracks, and each track can control either the internal sound generator or a sound generator connected via MIDI. That's pretty luxurious!

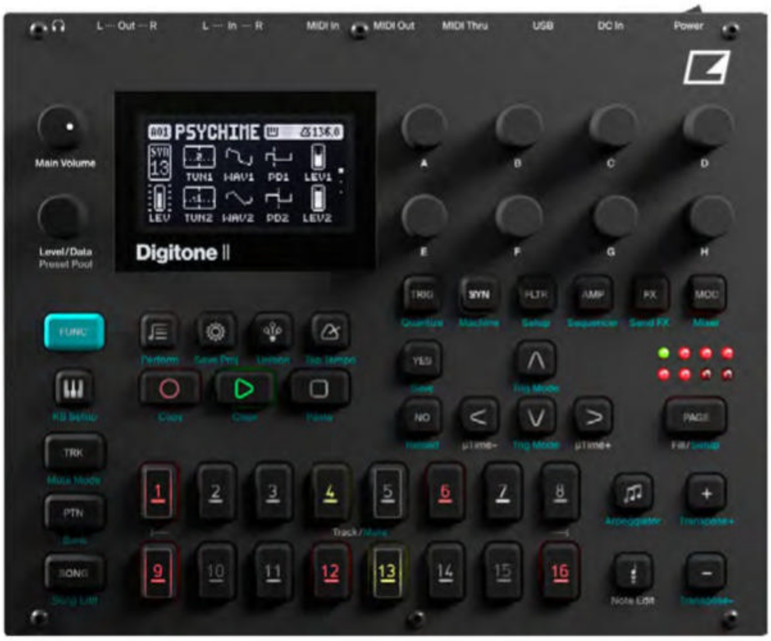
Up to 128 steps

The solid metal housing of the Digitone II is the same size, appearance and workmanship as its predecessor, but the design is a little more serious because the light gray and colorful buttons are now also black and the display is no longer bright yellow. Connoisseurs will also notice the double number of LEDs above the page button on the right. This is because each track can now be up to 8 bars/128 steps and thus twice as long as its predecessor. A practical feature here: With page loop you can select any bars to be played in a loop. It is also possible to temporarily loop only bars 1, 2, 5 and 8, or only bars 3 and 4, and skip the other bars. A great feature, and not just for live performances!

Suitable for the stage

The workmanship is robust, so Digitone II can also withstand the rough everyday touring routine. The endless controls with push function and the buttons are in the proven Elektron style, feel good and make a durable impression. The encoders allow fine adjustment of the parameters when they are held down - we know this feature from other Elektrons.

The OLED display is not particularly large, as is typical for Elektron. However, it is easy to read from different angles and numerous graphics such as the display of the envelope curve or the selected algorithm support operation. With eight endless controllers to the right of the display you can change the parameters shown there, with five buttons you can choose directly between the menus trigger, synthesis, filter, effects and modulation.



Buttons with new trigger modes

With the 16 buttons arranged in two rows in the lower area, you can trigger the sounds, select patterns and program the built-in step sequencer, plus there are numerous other buttons for navigation. All buttons are provided with numbers or symbols for easy operation and are backlit, reminiscent of gamer keyboards. The

Features

- Digital groovebox
- 16-way polyphonic
- 4 SYN machines
- Wavetone, Swarmer, FM Tone, FM Drum
- 16 tracks, internal / MIDI
- Up to 128 steps per track
- Various filters per track
- 3 LFO per track
- Built-in sequencer
- Master effects: overdrive/ compressor
- Dimensions
  215 x 176 x 63 mm

Facts

Manufacturer: Elektron
Web: elektron.se
Distribution: Retailer
Price: 999 Euro

- ▲ 16 tracks
- ▲ Up to 8 bars
- ▲ User-friendly FM synthesis
- ▲ Envelopes with loop mode
- ▲ New creative filters
- ▲ Sequencer with many extras
- ▲ Polyphonic MIDI tracks
- ▲ 16 voices

Sound:	■■■■■◧
Processing:	■■■■■◧
Price/perf.:	■■■■■□
Total:	■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Synthstrom Audible Deluge
1.399 Euro
synthstrom.com

Native Instruments Maschine+
899 Euro
native-instruments.com

Sonicware LIVEN XFM
279 Euro
sonicware.eu

NOTE EDIT : STEP 1:01
NOTE (E)
TIME (F)
LEN (G)
VEL (H)

The note edit display on the screen makes detailed editing of polyphonic tracks easier.

Main Volume
Level/Data Preset Pool
Digitone II
A01 RANKMAZ
Perform
Save Proj
Unison
Tap Tempo
Copy
Clear
Paste

The less bright colors of the display and lettering give Digitone II a more serious look than its predecessor.

disadvantage of this solution is that the buttons are not velocity or pressure dynamic like the small drum pads built into other grooveboxes. Thanks to the new Velocity trigger mode, however, you can distribute different dynamic levels across the 16 buttons and thus record different gradations. The Retrig mode offers various ratchets, i.e. repetitions at different speeds distributed across the buttons, which can also be recorded. And if you select the Preset Pool as the trigger mode, you can even assign a different sound from the pool to each button and record it - all on a single track, mind you!

Overbridge connection

All connections are on the back. The sound is sent to the outside world via a headphone and a stereo output, but you still have to do without individual analog outputs. In studio use, however, this is bearable, as all tracks will be available for separate editing in the DAW via the Overbridge connection via USB. Unfortunately, the Overbridge functionality for Digitone II was not yet available at the time of the test and could therefore not be tested.

Audio input and MIDI

The outputs are joined by a stereo input for looping in external audio signals and using the Digitone II as an effects device. This can also save a sub-mixer in live use, as the Digitakt audio output can be connected to the Digitone input, for example, and then only the Digitone stereo output needs to be sent to the PA mixer. Two of the three MIDI sockets can also be reconfigured as DIN sync for connection to older drum computers.

The power supply is provided via the included power supply. With a suitable adapter, we were also able to operate the Digitone II with a power bank and thus jam on the go without a power supply.

Beginner-friendly FM synthesis

The Digitone‘s built-in sound generation was previously based solely on frequency modulation (FM). Basically a good choice, as FM offers significantly more sound variety than classic (virtual) analog sound generation and can sound very dynamic and expressive. It is not without reason that the Yamaha DX7 displaced many of today‘s highly sought-after analog synthesizers from studios and stages when it was released.

Elektron has paid particular attention to making FM synthesis more accessible. Anyone familiar with FM synthesis will quickly find their way around, but beginners will not be overwhelmed either. And a little trial and error is part of the not always predictable FM synthesis anyway. The same engine can also be found in the Digitone II, which is therefore preset-compatible with its predecessor.

New machine for FM drums

In addition to this engine, now called FM-Tone, Digitone II offers three more machines: FM Drum, Wavetone and Swarmer. FM Drum is a variation of FM-Tone that has been optimized specifically for percussion and combines three operators with a noise generator for the transients or attack. This doesn‘t just work for drums, of course, but also enables interesting melodic sounds and arpeggios with adjustable noise levels. And with the fast pitch envelope, you can also create beautiful zaps and zocks, or crisp kicks for Psytrance, etc.

Virtual analog synthesis

Wavetone is a more classically constructed virtual analog synthesis with two oscillators and a noise generator. Morphable waveforms, phase distortion, hard sync and cross modulation between the two oscillators expand the sound spectrum and make Wavetone a successful addition to the two FM machines.

Swarmer only offers a single oscillator plus a sub-oscillator. With the Swarm parameter, however, you can add six copies of the oscillator, detune them against each other and animate the whole thing. The result is reminiscent of the typical Supersaw sounds, but is much more flexible due to the additional waveforms.

With the right adapter, Digitone II and Digitakt II can also be operated on the move using a power bank.

New creative filter models

In order to tame the FM sounds, which are often very rich in overtones and can quickly become aggressive and harsh, there is further processing using classic subtractive synthesis. The most important component is the filter, and this has also been significantly expanded. In addition to the filter of the old Digitone, there is a continuously morphable multimode filter and a new 4-pole low-pass filter. The two comb filters (positive/negative) offer scope for experimentation and for new sounds. They are characterized by several filter stages at the same distance and basically comb through the frequency spectrum, resulting in phaser-like modulations. Thanks to keytracking, the new comb filters can also be used for physical modeling and you can use them to recreate pianos or other natural instruments or develop your own instruments. In any case, an exciting sound-forming addition.

And for modulation, in addition to the envelopes for filter and amp, there are also 3 freely assignable LFOs with a variety of adjustable parameters.

Performance kits

The sounds of the different tracks can be saved together as a kit in the Digitone II. Basically, each pattern contains its own kit, but thanks to the new performance kits, the current kit can also be locked and the sounds remain unchanged even when changing patterns - practical if you want to try out a successful sound kit with different sequences.

Flexible sequencer

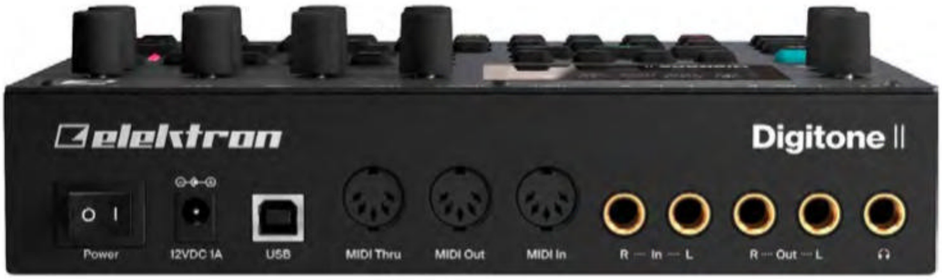
The built-in sequencer has always been a strength of Elektron products, and the Digitone II is no exception. Sequences can be recorded in real time, even chromatically. The latter works either via the 16 buttons, which then become a mini keyboard (with selectable tone scales), or an external keyboard. Alternatively, steps can be set using a running light sequencer in the style of a TR-X0X, with the 16 buttons each representing a step. Each track can have different lengths, which enables exciting polyrhythms. Parameter changes can be recorded in real time, but of course the Elektron-typical parameter lock including trigless lock (value change without triggering the sound) is also possible, as are flexible trigger conditions for probability.

16-voice polyphonic

The sequencer is polyphonic, so you benefit from the Digitone II's double number of voices (16 instead of 8 voices). Editing polyphonic tracks is very easy thanks to the updated NoteEdit display on the screen. Another new feature is that patterns can now be transposed directly in semitones to adapt them to the pitch of a singer or other instrument or to provide more variation on stage. And Prep-Mute allows you to prepare multiple mutes at the same time.

Euclidian sequencer

Like the Digitakt II, the Digitone II also features the new Euclidean sequencer. It is based on parallel pulse generators that can have different speeds and thus create interesting rhythmic and polyrhythmic sequences that can be changed intuitively by changing a few parameters.



There are no individual analog outputs, but with Overbridge it will be possible to transfer the individual tracks separately to the DAW via USB.

New master effects

There are also numerous effects. In addition to delay, reverb and chorus, you will also find bit crushers, sample reduction and overdrive to change the sound. In addition, the master channel has a global overdrive/distortion effect with a slightly more aggressive sound than the track overdrive, as well as a practical new sidechain-capable compressor.

More info

VERDICT

Digitone II is an improvement on its predecessor in every respect. Double tracks with double the length and double the number of voices combined with additional sound and filter machines make the digital groovebox even more flexible. The tried and tested Elektron principle of the first Digitone with intuitive access to FM synthesis and a very powerful sequencer in a compact and robust housing has been retained or even expanded. Thanks to the Overbridge connection, the Digitone II can be easily integrated into a computer-controlled studio environment, the 16 tracks that can also be used for MIDI also allow the creation of complete tracks without a computer - ideally in conjunction with the similarly constructed Digitakt II for drums and other samples. ⁘

Test: Behringer Syncussion SY-1

Syncussion SY-1 is a two-channel drum synth that drum manufacturer Pearl developed in 1979 to complement acoustic drums. As Techno music became popular in the 90s, the sounds were also used for hard bass and bone-dry percussion, which gave the Syncussion cult status and still leads to high used prices today. We have tested for you whether the inexpensive Behringer replica is an alternative to the rare original. **by Jan Wilking**

Features

- 2-channel percussion synthesizer
- based on Pearl Syncussion SY-1
- Analog sound generation
- Two oscillators per channel
- Can be controlled via MIDI or CV
- Eurorack format (80 HP)
- Dimensions 95 x 424 x 136 mm

Facts

Manufacturer: Behringer
Web: behringer.com
Price: 198 Euro

- ▲ Characteristic analog sound
- ▲ Various oscillator modes
- ▲ Flexible modulation
- ▲ Two channels
- ▲ Can also be played tonally/via keyboard
- ▲ Can be triggered dynamically
- ▲ Eurorack format
- ▲ Affordable price
- ▼ Spartan MIDI functions

Sound: ■■■■■□
Features: ■■■■■■
Price/perf.: ■■■■■◧

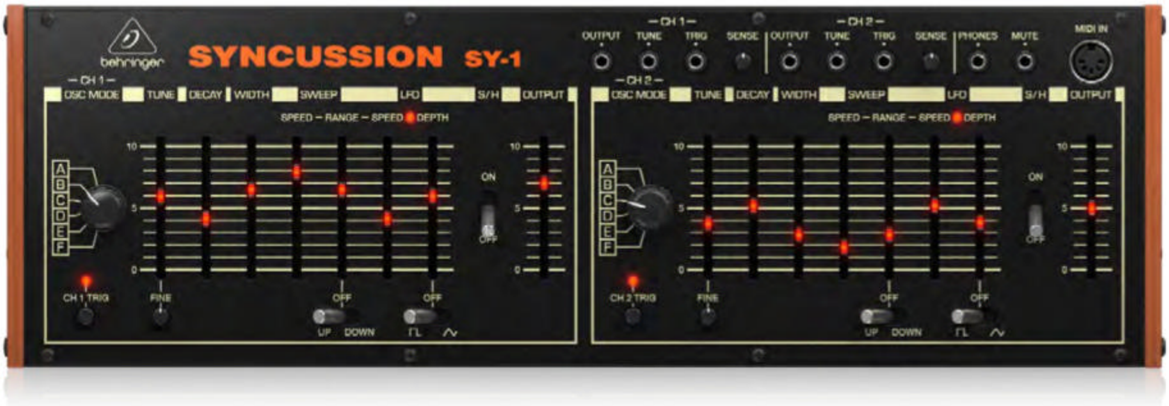
Total: ■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Michigan Synth Works SY-1/05
from 378 Euro
michigansynthworks.com

Elektron Model:Cycles
329 Euro
elektron.se

Arturia Drumbrute Impact
255 Euro
arturia.com



Behringer used the same housing for the Syncussion clone as for most of its other desktop synthesizers. This has the advantage that you can remove the actual synthesizer and screw it into a Eurorack, which then also takes over the power supply. Due to the width, however, you have to plan for 80 HP. As a module in the Eurorack, the rear connections are no longer usable, so the most important parts have been mounted on the top.

Various MIDI options

You can play the two channels of the Syncussion SY-1 via MIDI using the MIDI input, with the Behringer replica offering two options. You can either play both sounds via a single MIDI channel, one sound via note number 36 (a low C) and the second sound via note number 38 (the D above). Classic applications would be kick and snare for a simple drum set, or two differently tuned toms. You cannot play the sounds tonally in this mode, the tuning can only be adjusted manually using the tune control.

If you want to play the sounds in different pitches using the keyboard, you have to switch to MIDI mode 2. Here you can control each of the two sounds separately via two different MIDI channels and then play them across the entire keyboard (5 octaves). This not only makes sense for toms or percussion, but the SY-1 can also produce cool basses in this mode, be it sub-basses in the TR-808 style, hard Techno sequences or crisp EBM basslines with an FM sound.

Dynamic analog triggering

Unfortunately, the MIDI mode can only be changed using the free Synthtribe app, which in turn only communicates with the synthesizer via a USB connection. And this USB socket is located on the back, as are the DIP switches for setting the MIDI channel. So you have to decide on the appropriate settings before installing it in the rack if you want to control Syncussion in the Eurorack via MIDI.

If you control the SY-1 in an analog way, it doesn‘t matter, of course. The synthesizer has inputs for pitch and trigger on the top for this, with the latter reacting dynamically: depending on the level of the incoming signal, the volume and sound also change, so that Syncussion can be played velocity-sensitively via drum pads, but also via suitable sequencer and trigger modules in the Eurorack. The sensitivity can be adjusted to the input signal using two small controls.

Two channels with individual outputs

Each channel also has its own audio output for separate processing of the two sounds. With the same or similar settings, this also enables interesting stereo sounds with appropriate panning in the mixer! There is still the output for headphones and a mute input. The latter should actually be used to shorten the decay time using a foot switch, i.e. to stop the sound. But this can also be done

SYNCUSSION
behringer

The USB port is used for communication with the Synthtribe app, but is unfortunately no longer accessible when installed in a Eurorack.

using control voltage from the Eurorack, which in combination with suitable sequencer modules enables exciting grooves.

In the classic desktop housing, the included external power supply takes over the power supply, and you have unhindered access to the USB connection (which is class-compliant and also transmits MIDI), the audio outputs of both channels as a large jack, the DIP switches for the MIDI channel and a MIDI thru socket.

From A-F

The user interface is divided into two identically constructed channels on the left and right. The two trigger buttons are practical when tweaking the sound, so that you can hear the current sound even without a keyboard connected.

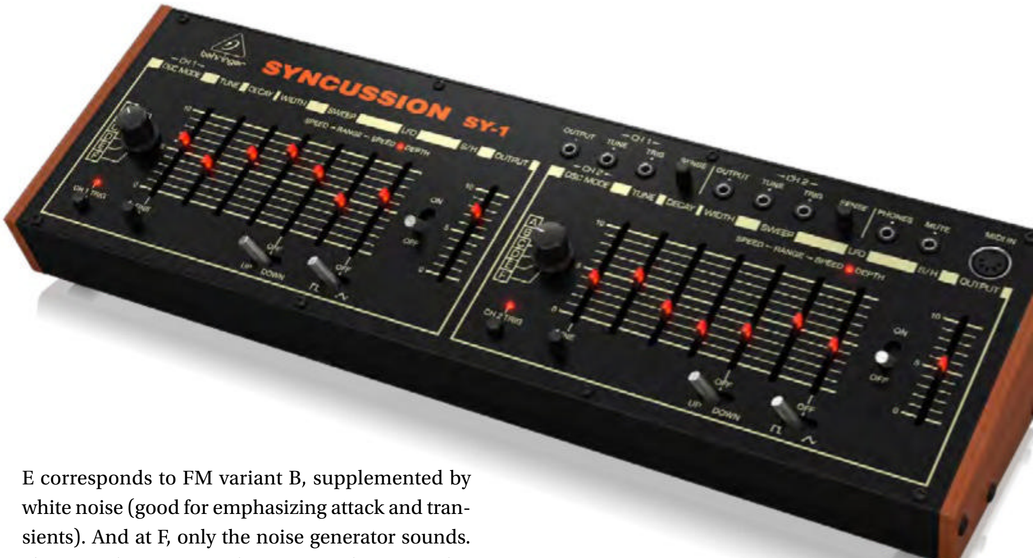
From left to right, each channel begins with a switch control with 6 options, which are labeled rather unspectacularly from A to F. Behind this are different connections between the two analog oscillators, which have a significant effect on the sound. In our opinion, it would not have hurt to print more specific names here, deviating from the original, but after a little time you automatically know what is behind each letter.

Analog oscillators with FM and noise

A is the simplest variant, with only a single oscillator forming the basis for the sound. But even in this variant you can clearly hear why the Syncussion is so popular. A single oscillator in combination with the other processing options described below has a lot of oomph and power.

Variant B links both oscillators via frequency modulation. The raw and hard FM sounds that result from this in combination with the further analog post-processing are among the defining sounds of the Syncussion and were used unmistakably in numerous early techno tracks. With modern technology such as the Elektron Digitone II, which was tested in parallel, this special sound is difficult to reproduce.

With C and D you hear both oscillators in parallel, with D controlling the envelope intensity via the trigger input independently of the controller position. This enables very dynamic playing. Unfortunately, we were unable to use this via MIDI, as the Syncussion SY-1 does not seem to process MIDI velocity. In addition to notes, only MIDI controllers 80 and 81 are received to control the decay time of the channels.



SY-1 can also be installed in a Eurorack and integrated into a modular system via the sockets on the upper edge.

E corresponds to FM variant B, supplemented by white noise (good for emphasizing attack and transients). And at F, only the noise generator sounds. That sounds unspectacular on paper, but in combination with the analog filter and the second channel, a variety of interesting sounds and sequences can be created with this alone.

Tuning and filter

After selecting the oscillator mode, you can further edit the sound using seven long faders. With Tune you can roughly adjust the pitch over a range of several octaves, and an additional small control takes care of the fine-tuning. Decay controls the decay time within an extreme range of 6 milliseconds up to over 2 seconds. From ultra-crisp zings and clicks to long booms, everything is included here, and as described, can also be dynamically modulated using voltage or MIDI CC. With Width you can adjust the frequency of the analog low-pass filter, which perfectly complements the powerful and raw basic sound of the oscillators.

Pitch envelope

An important aspect of a drum synthesizer is the pitch envelope, after all, the classic analog drum sounds (kicks, snares, toms etc.) consist mainly of simple sine or triangle waves, the pitch of which is modulated by a fast envelope and thus gets the necessary kick. Syncussion is very flexible in this area, you can set the speed and extent of the pitch modulation as well as the direction, i.e. downwards for the typical boom of a deep bass drum or upwards for the piuuu of a disco tom. And here you can hear the advantages of an analog envelope, the whole thing sounds very lively and also allows very fast modulations without sounding static.

LFO and S&H

But that‘s not all, there is also an LFO with the waveforms square and triangle. The speed and modulation depth can be adjusted using the fader. And finally there is a sample & hold function for random modulations, which, due to the very wide and non-adjustable control range, is more likely to be of interest to experimental musicians.

The final part of each channel is the volume control. Since the Syncussion fortunately has a decent level coming out of the outputs, it is best not to raise the output faders all the way up straight away.

SYNCUSSION SY-1

More info

VERDICT

Unfortunately, we didn‘t have one of the rare originals to compare, but we know the sound well from various productions and have already had replicas from other manufacturers in the studio to test. And Uli‘s Syncussion clone is very close to the famous Syncussion sound in terms of sound, making it clearly one of the most successful replicas from Behringer, especially since, unlike other Behringer synthesizers of recent times, we haven‘t noticed any relevant bugs. It would of course have been nice if the SY-1 had received a bit more extensive MIDI control, but on the plus side, the option of integrating it into a Eurorack modular system is a plus. And when you consider that for under €200 you can get a two-voice analog synthesizer that can produce rich drums, percussion and effects as well as raw, powerful basses, we can‘t help but recommend it.

Test: Arturia KeyLab mk3

Keylab mk3 is the new flagship of Arturia's Master Keyboard series. And as soon as you unpack it, you realize that this is a premium controller. This is because the French company has packed the keyboard and technology into a robust aluminum housing instead of plastic, which not only feels good, but also looks chic with its contrasting sides made of real wood. by Jan Wilking

Features

- USB/MIDI master keyboard
- 49/61 keys
- 12 pads with RGB LEDs
- 9 controls, 9 faders (about 50mm)
- 3.5 inch color display
- Chord & scale functions
- Arpeggiator
- MIDI input/output
- Includes Analog Lab Pro
- Dimensions: 787 x 280 x 72mm

Facts

Manufacturer: Arturia
Web: arturia.com
Distribution: Tomeso
Price: 449 Euro

▲ Build and design
▲ Touch-sensitive controllers
▲ Color display
▲ Encoders and faders
▲ Multi-colored drum pads
▲ Arpeggiator
▲ DAW control
▲ Analog Lab integration
▼ No poly-aftertouch

Workmanship: ■■■■■◧
Operation: ■■■■■◧
Price/Perf: ■■■■■◧

Total: ■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Novation 49SL MKIII
559 Euro
novationmusic.com

Nektar Panorama T4
275 Euro
nektartech.com

NI Kontrol S49 mk3
685 Euro
native-instruments.com

The faders and encoders react to touch and the display then shows the corresponding parameter directly.

The keyboard, which is available in black or white, is a successful compromise between many control elements with sufficient spacing, while still having rather compact dimensions. Keylab mk3 is available with 49 or 61 keys, whereby the dimensions do not differ greatly because the Pitchbender, Modwheel and Transpose buttons have been moved to the top of the keyboard on the 61-key version. Otherwise, both models are equipped identically: 12 illuminated RGB pads (touch and pressure sensitive), 3.5" full color screen (320 x 480 pixels) with 8 control buttons and large click encoder, 9 faders with a good 50mm control range and 9 additional encoders in typical Arturia fashion.

Touch-sensitive, but no poly-AT

The faders and encoders offer a pleasant resistance and are touch-sensitive. You only need to touch the controller or fader to see the name and current value of the parameter assigned to this controller on the display. The keyboard is also of a high standard, even if it doesn't quite match the feel of the NI Kontrol S61 mk3. In contrast to the NI keyboard, the keys only process monophonic Aftertouch in addition to Velocity. This is a pity, because the CS-80V or Pigments, for example, can be played much more expressively with Poly-AT.

Keylab is perfectly matched to the in-house software, Analog Lab Pro, which is included in the scope of delivery along with various other software. This gives you direct access to thousands of presets from different sound generators; from vintage classics such as the Minimoog, Jupiter-8, Synthex and Solina string machine to modern synthesizers such as Minifreak and the complex wavetable synth, Pigments. You can search for the right sound directly on the keyboard, whereby the mass of sounds can be limited according to categories such as Instrument or Genre. The rather large display shows chic graphics of the respective sound generator in full color. The knobs and faders are automatically assigned to the most important parameters so that you can tweak the sound directly. Layer and split sounds can also be created in just a few simple steps on the keyboard itself - Arturia has solved everything very intuitively.

Chord, Scale and Arpeggiator

Keylab mk3 also has some playing aids on board. You can play any chord and then play it via the keyboard, including adjustable strumming and various voicings. You can also select any key, even parallel to the chord or arp functions, so that only notes that match the key can be played. At this point, we would have liked a light guide like on the NI Kontrol or Novation SL or even the Keystep 37, which displays the keys that match the selected key.

In addition to the usual patterns, the Arpeggiator also offers an interesting Random function, which allows random changes in Octave, Length, Velocity and more. The intensity of the randomness can be adjusted individually for each parameter, which makes for very lively arpeggios.

DAW Control

Keylab mk3 also offers comprehensive DAW control, including control of plug-ins and mixers using the buttons, encoders, faders and pads. As this control differs from DAW to DAW, a detailed description would go beyond the scope of this test. We definitely liked the display of parameter names, even for plug-ins from other providers. And creating your own profiles for controlling software or hardware synthesizers via MIDI-CC, for example, is possible directly on the keyboard and is extensive. For example, separate MIDI commands can be assigned to the large encoder for turning and clicking.

Verdict

Keylab mk3 is an upscale Master Keyboard. The workmanship, feel and design are premium; the only thing to criticize here is the lack of Poly-AT on the semi-weighted keyboard. Touch-sensitive faders and encoders, in combination with the color display, are a great advantage when controlling plug-ins and your DAW. And, in conjunction with the included Analog Lab Pro software, the Keylab has a real hardware feel thanks to its deep integration. ∷

KeyLab mk3
Universal MIDI controller

More Info

Black Lion Audio

Revolution EXP

You can never have enough analog inputs and outputs in the studio, especially if you work a lot with external equipment. A drum computer with individual outputs, a stereo synthesizer and an analog effects unit and even the 8 inputs of larger audio interfaces are not enough. And sending the individual DAW tracks to an external mixer or summing device in order to glue them together in analog style quickly fails due to the lack of outputs. Many audio interfaces do offer digital connections for expansion. However, most of these extensions are designed for the connection of many microphones and, therefore, have built-in preamps for each additional channel, which you don't need in an electronic home studio, but still have to pay for.

This is where Evolution EXP comes into play. This expansion, installed in a 19-inch housing with a one unit height, only offers line inputs and outputs in classic jack format, and there are 8 of each. Evolution EXP is connected via the common ADAT format, which is integrated into many audio interfaces. The USB-C interface, on the other hand, is only used for firmware updates. Each channel has an 8-digit LED meter with overload indicator. If required, each input channel can be individually attenuated by 10 dB using a button, so that louder signals can also be recorded without distortion. The interface supports sample rates of up to 192 kHz, and the sound quality completely impressed us in the practical test: transparent, dynamic and without background noise.

A special feature of the Revolution EXP is the MMC clocking, so that the ADAT extension can serve as a clock for the entire studio, if desired. Alternatively, the device can also synchronize itself via the two ADAT ports or the BNC word clock connection found on the back of the unit.

Verdict

You can also use the many inputs and outputs in your desktop studio to flexibly integrate hardware sound generators, connect multi-channel/surround monitor sets or mix/sum analog. Revolution EXP offers 8 inputs and 8 outputs specifically for line signals so that, unlike many other ADAT expansions, you don't have to pay for unnecessary microphone preamps and can get the best possible sound quality. As the icing on the cake, Revolution can also serve as a solid clock for your studio.

Manufacturer: Black Lion Audio
Web: blacklionaudio.de
Distribution: Audiowerk
Price: 949 Euro

Rating: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥☐

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More info:
hofa-college.com

Test: Freqport FreqTube FT1

The sound of analog tubes, in particular their harmonic distortion, is probably one of the most common reasons why analog outboard equipment can still be found in many studios. On the other hand, good analog effects are also expensive and digital plug-ins are getting closer and closer in terms of sound. Freqport aims to combine the best of both worlds with FreqTube. **by Jan Wilking**

Features

- Analog tube processor
- Integration via plug-in
- Four tubes
- 2x 12AT7, 2x E83CC/12AX7
- Professional ESS converters
- Color display
- 8 assignable rotary potentiometers
- Dimensions (W x H x D): 205 x 130 x 50 mm
- VST3/AU/AAX

Facts

Manufacturer: Freqport
Web: freqport.com
Distrib: Hyperactive
Price: 979 Euro

▲ Analog tube processor
▲ Two variations
▲ Integration via plug-in
▲ Up to four parallel instances
▲ Only 1 USB cable needed
▲ Freely assignable controls
▲ Color display
▼ Price
▼ Latecy

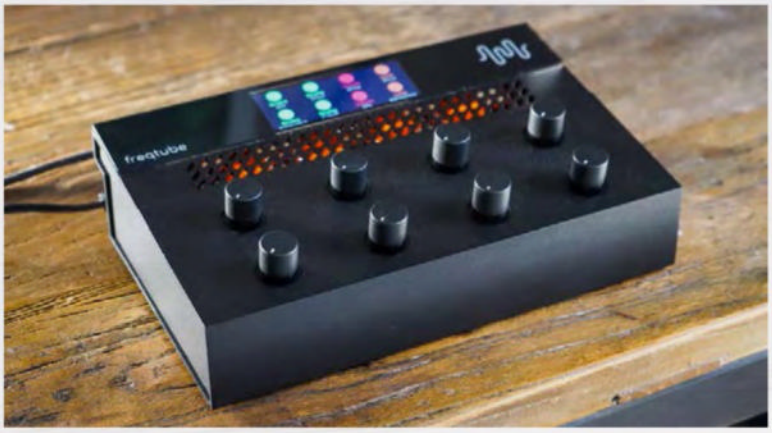
Sound: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥◧
Workmanship: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥◧
Price/Perf: 🟥🟥🟥🟥☐☐

Total: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥☐

Alternatives

Elektron Analog Heat FX
919 Euro
elektron.se

McDSP APB
from 3.779 Euro
mcdsp.com



FreqTube can be integrated into the DAW like a plug-in, with up to four parallel instances.

FreqTube offers you four analog tubes in a compact and robust desktop housing. The connection to the computer is made with a single USB-C cable, which can be used to add real analog tube sound to up to four tracks in your DAW.

After connecting the external power supply unit, the tubes are illuminated in a stylish orange color, which not only looks nice, but is also practical in use. This allows you to see directly which of the tubes are in use and which are not. Two pairs of tubes are installed: a modern ECC83/12AX7 variant is intended for more powerful distortion, while the ECC81/12AT7 sound somewhat more subtle and are also suitable for the Master Bus.

All tubes can be used in parallel. This makes it possible, for example, to send both the kick and the snare through the E83CC as mono tracks with different settings, while stereo processing takes place on the Master Channel through the two 12AT7s. However, the different tubes cannot be mixed with each other.

Simple DAW integration

The large color display shows the assignment of the 8 hardware controls. It adopts the track name and also the color of the track from the DAW, which provides greater clarity, especially when using multiple instances. If you have one tube each on Kick, Snare, Guitar and Bassline, you can freely decide how the controls should be assigned. You can apply Drive from all three instances to the controls, as well as the Filter Frequency for the bassline and the Harmonics for the guitar track. As these are normal controllers and not endless encoders, you first have to pick up the respective parameter value by turning the controller when changing the plug-in.

Digital Multimode Filter

In addition to Drive, you can also control the harmonics of the selected tubes, which is visualized graphically. Headroom and Input Gain can also be adjusted. There are also two Multimode Filters. The first of these digital filters only processes the dry signal. This is practical if you want to add the tube sound using the Dry/Wet control and filter the original signal to avoid overlapping. With the second filter, you can adjust the distorted signal and tame the overtones, clean up the bass range or boost certain frequency ranges. Of course, we would have liked an analog filter here, but this would have raised the price even further.

Hardware vs. Software

All parameters can be automated directly in your DAW, which is another advantage of integration via plug-in, in addition to total recall and the elimination of up to 8 audio cables compared to analog routing. The disadvantages of the higher price and latency compared to pure software emulations remain, which FreqTube should compensate for with better sound. Since the digitally emulated tubes in the plug-ins from renowned manufacturers such as Universal Audio and Softube already sound very realistic, you shouldn‘t expect any extreme improvement. In a blind comparison, however, we chose FreqTube as the best-sounding effect in 9 out of 10 cases.

Verdict

With FreqTube, you can integrate analog tubes on up to four channels into your DAW using just a USB cable. The integration as a plug-in is straightforward and ran stably in the test; the equipment with various tubes and additional filters is a practical solution and, depending on the application, there is also audible added value compared to plug-ins. The differences are not serious and are particularly evident in the extreme ranges such as subtle saturation of the Master Channel or strong distortion with the Drive turned all the way up. To our ears, the hardware sounds more open and detailed here, and rounder and more pleasant overall. Whether this slight improvement in sound is worth almost 1000 Euro and additional latency depends on your personal taste. ⁘

More Info

Test: Fostex TH-808

If you‘re a lover of high fidelity sound and are looking for a nice pair of premium headphones, the Fostex TH808 might be an interesting new offering. We took a closer look at them in our test. **by Heiner Kruse**

The Japanese manufacturer, Fostex, is well established in the headphone business in both the HiFi and Studio sectors. The Fostex TH808 is visually very similar to the top-of-the-range TH909 model, which can be described as its bigger brother, but is available for around 400 Euro less. According to the manufacturer, both have an open design (“Open Back Dynamic”) in common. Even though the headphones have padding that surrounds the ear, sound is still allowed to pass through to the outside, creating a natural sound. This is not the only reason why the TH-808 are headphones for at home - or at least for occasions where you are undisturbed. In the Studio, you could probably use them very well for Mixing and Mastering, but less well for Recording.

TH808 vs. TH909

The exact differences between the TH808 and TH909 are not so easy to determine. The TH909‘s earcups are made of burgundy Japanese cherry birch instead of black walnut like the TH808. We are talking about largely the same technology and the same 1.5 Tesla drivers (compared to the 1 Tesla drivers of the TH616) based on the successful TH900 predecessor series. Sensitivity/Sound Pressure Level is sometimes quoted 3-4 dB lower for the TH808, but Fostex itself quotes 100dB for both. The TH808 is a few grams lighter and the cable is 15 cm shorter.

The TH808‘s earcups are also made of dual-layer aluminum applications. The soft imitation leather padding (more precisely: low-resilience urethane padding covered with soft imitation leather) and the only lightly encased metal rails of the headband, make it appear both convenient and airy, not too bulky, but not too small either. The ear pads, as well as the headband cover, are replaceable. You can wear the TH808 comfortably over a longer period of time; it almost sits a little loose. According to Fostex, the weight of approximately 370g without cable (395g on my scales) speaks for itself.

Sound

If the frequency response is specified as 5 Hz - 45 kHz, this is a wider range than that which can be heard by humans. Either way, the headphones sound good. But I‘ll try to describe this in a little more detail here. I was able to make out a clearly defined reproduction in the bass range. Well-produced deep sub-basses from Drum & Bass tracks can be heard in detail with these headphones, even if something seemed to be missing at the very bottom of one of the test tracks. To my ears, the TH808 sounded precise in the mid-range, but also felt a little overemphasized at around 500-1200 Hz, while I found it to be pleasantly unobtrusive and elegant sounding, especially at lower volumes in the higher mid-range compared to other monitor headphones. I found the treble to be brilliant and present in various test pieces and mostly nice and soft sounding, at least as long as you don‘t turn it up too loud. In my opinion, however, the TH808 can handle high volumes quite well. Transients are reproduced very precisely and clearly. The overall listening experience is impressive. The sound stage often conveys a beautiful, three-dimensional expansion, which I was able to perceive and enjoy in a differentiated way, especially at lower volumes.

Verdict

The Fostex TH-808 is a high-end headphone that is pleasant to use in practice and offers particularly precise and spatial sound reproduction. The bass response is clearly defined, and I also found that it sometimes had a rather bright mid-range sound. The construction and materials are documented in detail by the manufacturer and distributor. There are many similarities with the TH909, which is around 400 Euro more expensive, and I even like the TH808 better visually. Compared to the TH909 and in the high-end range, the TH808 is a rather inexpensive offer, whereas prices in the studio range are often significantly lower. The TH808‘s wearing comfort, sound, padding and long cable undoubtedly convey a pleasant feeling of luxury. ⁘

More Info

Features

- High-end headphones
- Open design, dynamic
- Wired, circumaural
- 5 Hz - 45 kHz frequency response
- 25 Ohm impedance
- 50mm membranes
- Neodymium drivers
- Maximum input power: 1800mW
- Weight: under 400g (without cable)

Facts

Manufacturer: Fostex
Web: fostexinternational.com
Distrib: megaaudio.de
Price: about 1,498 Euro

- ▲ Precise and spatial sound reproduction
- ▲ Clearly defined bass reproduction
- ▲ High-quality parts
- ▲ Good wearing comfort
- ▲ High sensitivity and volume

Sound: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥◧
Workmanship: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥
Price/Perf: 🟥🟥🟥🟥◧☐

Total: 🟥🟥🟥🟥🟥☐

Alternatives

Fostex TH909
1,849 Euro
megaaudio.de

Audite LCD-X
1,139 Euro
audeze.com

Test: Wave Transformer

EarthQuaker Devices is a long-established company that offers a wide range of effect pedals. Now they are expanding their range of modular synthesizers with a second Eurorack module, the Wave Transformer Transfiguration Oscillator. It is the first instrument from EQD. In the following, we want to see whether this module can prove itself as the company's first synthesizer voice. **by Dr. Chelsea Bruno**

Features

- 20 HP Analogue Eurorack Module
- 1 oscillator
- 7 oscillator waveform outputs
- 9 inputs
- 3 Switches: Sub Source, Sub Octave, Complex Source

Facts

Manufacturer:
EarthQuaker Devices
Web:
earthquakerdevices.com
Distribution: Website
Price: 249 Euro

- ▲ Analogue
- ▲ Lots of patching possibilities
- ▲ Built-in attenuators and attenuverters
- ▲ Affordable price
- ▲ Spacious design
- ▼ Limited function of Transform knob

Sound: ■■■■■■
Design: ■■■■■□
Price/Perf.: ■■■■■□

Total: ■■■■■◧

Alternatives

Doepfer A-111 2v High End VCO II Vintage Edition
295 Euro
doepfer.de

Erica Synths Black VCO V2 Analog Eurorack Oscillator Module
230 Euro
ericasynths.lv

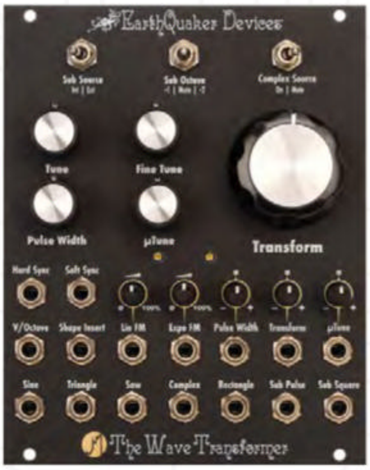
EarthQuaker Devices has been developing effects pedals since 2004, but in 2020, the Afterneath effects pedal was developed into a Eurorack module, capable of a few more functions. In January of 2024, EQD released their second Eurorack module, the Wave Transformer Transfiguration Oscillator, designed by Josh Kolenc. With 7 waveform outputs, 6 CV inputs, an audio insert, 2 sync inputs, and 8 panel controls, the all-analogue Wave Transformer module is a unique new addition to the ever-expanding world of Eurorack.

Described as "vintage-voiced" by EQD, the analogue sound of the Wave Transformer is has a warm tone and a heaviness to it; it has very good sound quality and it patches wonderfully with all neighboring modules, providing some unexpected surprises in modulation possibilities. All of the audio outputs mix well with one another, so essentially all 7 voices of the oscillator could be layered to create a full spectrum of its sound.

Things to remember when patching

Because the Wave Transformer has some unique features, there are some things to remember so that it will work efficiently while patching. The first thing that one should keep in mind when starting to use this oscillator is that the Transform control knob only affects the Complex output. The Transform knob will not change the sound of any other output, unless you patch the Complex output back into one of the FM inputs. The pulse width control only affects the rectangle output unless you patch the rectangle wave back into the Shape Insert. Then, both the Pulse Width and Transform knob affect the „Complex" output.

Regarding the three switches at the top of the module, the Sub Source switch affects the Transform, Sub Pulse and Sub Square outputs. The Sub Octave switch affects the Sub Square and Transform outputs. The Sub Pulse output will remain at -1 octave, regardless of the state of this switch. The Complex source switch affects only the Complex output. CV inputs have useful ramp symbols, which means the inputs have attenuators, and those with the +/- symbols are accompanied by attenuverters. The Hard and Soft Sync inputs will yield different effects when patching bipolar control signals and those with different polarities.



While some may find 20hp to be large for a single oscillator, the Complex output, Transform function, unique sync behaviors, and micro-tuning make the Wave Transformer more than a typical VCO. The Transform knob is the largest knob on the module, and it only affects the 'Complex' output, but it is very easy to turn which can be fun for interactivity in the heavy basslines it is capable of. The design is streamlined, and it is a bit surprising that the module does not include a single LED.

After hearing what the 'Complex' output does and how the knob affects it, it would be up to the synth player to decide if it is worth it. The activity of the 'Complex' waveform output is a big part of what makes this module unique compared to other oscillators. It does make some complex sounds, that is for sure. In fact, the golden symbol on the bottom of the module is what the complex output can potentially look like on an oscilloscope, which is artistic and neat. The 20hp size also allows for extra space between knobs, which is helpful, because even though there is a lot of features packed into the front panel, it does not feel overcrowded or uncomfortable to play, there is plenty of space, so there is still room to breathe.

This module includes all of the basic features that you would expect of a VCO, but also packs some extras for sonic exploration. The Transform section allows flexibility and strange wave shaping capabilities, but also goes a step further to allow processing of external signals. The Sub Source switch allows you to choose if the sub octave circuit tracks the internal oscillator or the source going into the Shape Insert. This allows for strange mixtures between internal and external sources. The ultra-precise uTune, aka microtune (marked with the mathematical symbol mu), is useful for accurately tuning the oscillator, and the accompanying CV input is especially useful for those interested in composing and performing drone and microtonal music. Attenuated modulation of this input can create slow and subtle changes in the beat frequency, while using less attenuation can yield precise pitch bends and microtonal sequences.

Verdict

The Wave Transformer, with its plenitude of patching options, would be a useful oscillator for beginners as well as experienced synthesists. It is particularly good for exploring bass and the sub octave regions, and without a doubt, it can be useful for all types of musicians and sound designers who are looking to get creative with layering waveforms.

Demo video

Power Producer: Ableton Push

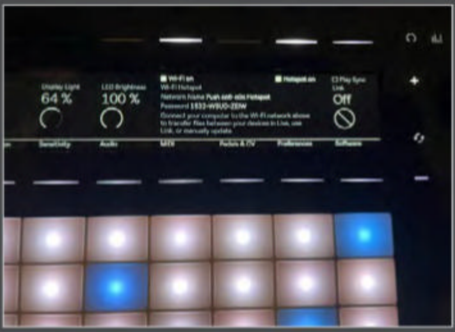
Smarter workflow w/ Push 12.1

The latest update, 12.1, makes Push even more user-friendly. The new features offer a wide range of options to speed up your workflow. From the simple setup of a hotspot to advanced search functions and improved handling of tracks and scenes. In this workshop, you'll learn how to make the most of the new features to maximize your creative process!

by Maya C. Sternel

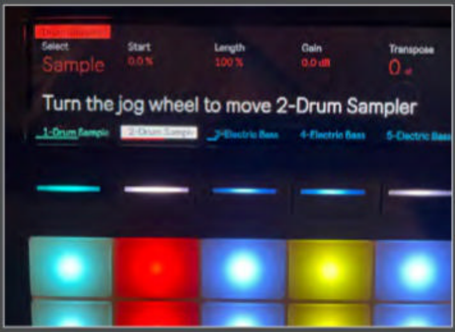
Project Info

Material: Ableton Live 12.1, Ableton Push 3 / Push 3 Standalone
Time required: 30 minutes
Content: Set up hotspot in stand-alone mode, move Tracks and Scenes, use Search Filter options, prevent automatic track selection.
Difficulty: Advanced


Wi-Fi on
Hotspot on
64 %
100 %
Off

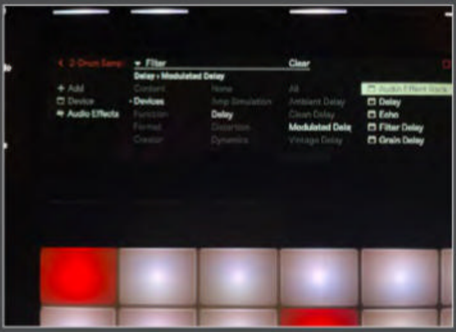
1 Set up a hotspot

If Push is in Stand Alone Mode, you will find a new menu item under Settings: **Hotspot**. If you activate **Hotspot**, Push creates a network name and generates a password. Select this network on the device to be connected and enter the password, for example, to transfer files from your PC or to use the network as a link hub.


Select
Sample
Start
Length
Gain
Transpose
Turn the jog wheel to move 2-Drum Sampler

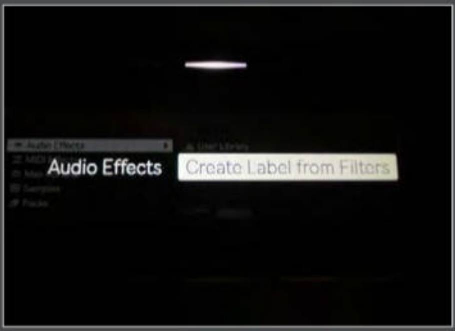
2 Move tracks

Tracks can now be easily moved and rearranged by holding down the button below the track name and moving the large jog wheel to the right or left to the new position. You can also rearrange scenes in the same way. To do this, hold down the scene starter button and move the jog wheel accordingly.


Filter
Clear
Delay
Echo
Filter Delay
Grain Delay

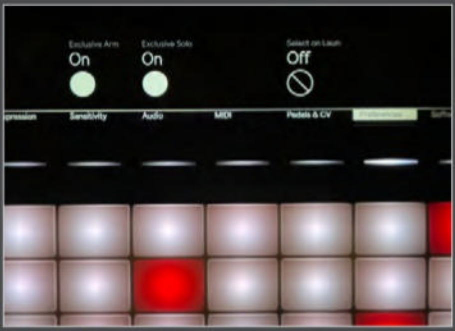
3 Use search filter

Similar to Live 12, Push now also has search filters with filter groups and tags. If you want to add an instrument or effect in Push, you will see the filter function in the top menu bar. Press the button above it to activate it and then scroll to the desired filter groups and criteria.


Audio Effects
Create Label from Filters

4 Save search

To save the search results, press the Jog Wheel to the right and confirm by pressing the Jog Wheel down again to **Create Label from Filters**. You can rename the label in the context menu. You can find the option to do this by pressing the button above the three small white dots in the top right of the display.


Exclusive Arm
On
Exclusive Solo
On
Select on Launch
Off
Sensitivity
Audio
MIDI
Pedals & CV
Preferences

5 Track selection

There is a new menu item in the settings: **Preferences**. Here, you have the option to deactivate **Select on Launch**. Let's assume you are working on the filter in track 1 in real time and start a clip in track 2 at the same time. If **Select on Launch** was activated, the display would now jump to track 2 and your filter run would be finished.

6 More sound options

However, if **Select on Launch** is deactivated, the new clip starts from track 2, but you can continue to tweak the filter. A new feature is the ability to group tracks directly in Push and assign parameters to Macros. Furthermore, the **Meld, Chord, Saturator** and **Limiter** devices have new presets and the new **Drum Sampler** is also included in the device selection.

Monthly music treasures

by Sascha Blach

En Voice: Route Du Soleil

The German artist Andreas Frenkel-Piesch took a break for 18 years before he released this EP. There are five tracks that sound like a beautiful summer day in the middle of winter. The consistently very poppy tracks combine elements of Dance, Downtempo, and Ambient with a pleasant atmosphere that feels chilled, Lounge-like, and very positive. The EP deliberately does not include vocals and remains instrumental, which particularly highlights its clear and well-thought-out production. While real instruments or a few unexpected accents could give the pieces additional depth and individuality, the super-clean sound quality makes up for it. As a soundtrack for the cinema in your head or mental vacation trips, the EP is definitely well suited.

Genre: Downtempo, Dance | Label: Self-Release

Sjöblom: Dead Of Night

This Swedish outfit comes from the environment of the Post-Punk band The Exploding Boy, where singer Johan Sjöblom Eliot also shapes the sound. Together with Robert Eklind (Ex-Malaise), he explores new sound territories with Sjöblom and ventures into the realms of Electro-Pop. On the present second album, „Dead Of Night“, the duo repeatedly dives into retro sounds, delivers all sorts of beautiful vocal melodies, and deliberately savors the sound aesthetics of the 80s. Occasional influences from Indie Pop, New Wave, Dark Wave, and Brit-pop are added, such as in „The Light I Need“. The basic mood is rather melancholic, sustained, and reflective; but with „Turn My Head“ or „Tomorrow“, there are also tracks that could fit well in the dark disco. By the way, the album is particularly worthwhile in the vinyl version, which is limited to 300 copies.

Genre: Electro-Pop | Label: COP International

The Rorschach Garden: Pleasure Under Pressure

Philipp Münch started the project The Rorschach Garden in the late 80s, and it seems that the music of that time has deeply influenced him to this day. „Pleasure Under Pressure“ sounds more like the 80s than the 80s themselves. The analog production combines Kraftwerk influences with Minimal Electro and Synth-Pop, while having a sad touch, as many songs deliberately feel bleak. The vocals are mostly more spoken-word-like, with minimal melody content, and the sound seems to have intentionally left many gaps and allowed imperfection. This creates a significant difference from the often very densely produced, smoothed-out albums of the present. Die-hard minimal fans probably already have the name The Rorschach Garden on their list – if not, it‘s time to catch up.

Genre: Minimal, Synth-Pop | Label: Ant-Zen

Zement: Passages

If Can or Neu! were still making music today, they might sound quite similar to this duo from Nuremberg. On their fourth album, Zement mixes Krautrock, Electro, Jazz, and Psychedelic into an appealing sound that feels hypnotic and repetitive, yet contains enough exciting elements to keep you entertained. Of course, Kraftwerk also had a clear influence, though more in the way songs are arranged rather than the instrumentation, as Zement relies on a mix of synths and acoustic instruments. Vocals in the traditional sense are often not necessary, as much remains completely instrumental, often only background spoken words suffice. And so these „Passages“ draw you into a pleasant vortex and ensure you float away hypnotized.

Genre: Kraut-Rock | Label: Crazysane Records

Mogwai: The Bad Fire

That Mogwai went through a difficult time is not really audible on their eleventh studio album. Rather, the 10-tracker sounds uplifting and positively stimulating, and incidentally brims with creativity. Somewhere between Post-Rock, soundtrack, and Ambient, the Scots meander through their songs, as if it were easy to pull off such quality effortlessly. The album, recorded in Lanarkshire with producer John Congleton (St. Vincent, Angel Olsen, John Grant), impresses with its warm, organic, and very natural sound. Here the drums sound like drums, without seeming thin or outdated. Distinctive for the record, alongside guitars and basses that are run through various effects chains, are the analog synths and vocals in some songs, which, thanks to intense processing, sound more like an instrument. It‘s beautiful when such treasures emerge from hard times.

Genre: Post-Rock | Label: Rock Action

The Halo Trees: Electric Mirror

Before their tour with the industrial legend Front Line Assembly, Beat-editor Sascha Blach and his colleagues from The Halo Trees dress selected songs from their career in an elegiac-electronic garb. You could call „Electric Mirror“ a remix album, but these 12 pearls between torch song and dreamy dance blur the lines between original and reinterpretation, bringing the poetry of the vocals and the Bowie-esque alienated harmonies into sharper focus. Meanwhile, the smoldering textures and flickering sequencers flirt with twitching guitars, psychedelic flutes, and Sascha‘s introspective vocals. A dark trip, a fascinating mirror image. (Guest review by Tobias Fischer).

Genre: Gothic, Shoegaze, Dark Pop | Label: COP International

Ulver: Liminal Animals

There is probably no other band that can boast such a versatile discography as these Norwegians. In their early years, they were considered influential in Black Metal and Folk, but since the late 90s, they have explored a wide range of genres such as Electronica, Industrial, Ambient, Post-Rock, 60s Psychedelic, or film music. In recent albums, their sound has somewhat „stabilized“, with Ulver standing for a mixture of Synth-Pop, Ambient, and Rock. Also on „Liminal Animals“, you hear many synthesizer textures intertwined with guitars, drums, trumpet, and Kristoffer Rygg‘s velvety vocals and choirs. The influence of the 80s is significant, everything sounds somewhat airy and relaxed, and in between, there is also a pure synth piece without beats and vocals with „Nocturne #1“. However, the highlight of the record is the dark Georg Trakl poem „Helian“ in Norwegian, musically breaking the boundary to Synthwave.

Genre: Synth-Rock | Label: House Of Mythology/Soulfood

Zuke: Come Closer

„Come Closer“ is a fitting title for a debut album, as it will likely be the first contact with the artist for many. Zuke is the electronic music project of producer and synth nerd Ed Zuccollo. His tracks combine elements of Jungle, Dubstep, Downtempo, House, and field recordings into a varied tapestry of melodies and deep basses that sometimes come across pleasingly, sometimes more experimentally. There are no vocals in the traditional sense; however, voices are used here and there. Ed, rooted in Wellington‘s music scene, has developed the pieces over the last six years. They reflect his experience as a keyboardist and DJ, but this does not mean it‘s a typical club album – many tracks are too complex for that. The album works rather as a filmically inspired journey, connecting classic sounds with modern electronic elements.

Genre: Electro | Label: Loop

Your event planner for 2025

23.01.2025 - 25.01.2025
NAMM Show
Anaheim, US

08.04.2025 - 11.04.2025
Prolight + Sound 2025
Frankfurt, DE

11.04.2025 - 13.04.2025
Synthfest France
Orvault, FR

08.05.2025 - 10.05.2025
Superbooth 2025
Berlin, DE

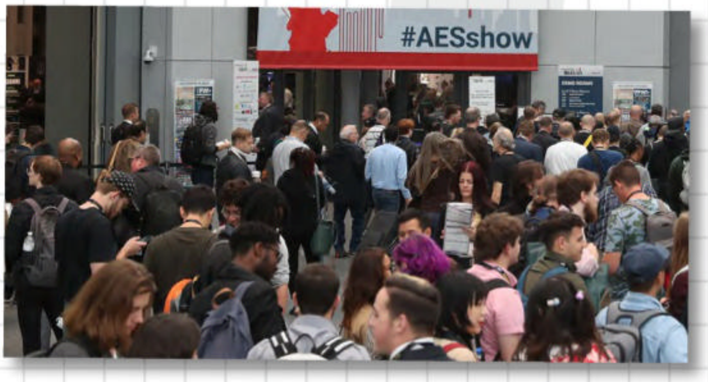
14.05.2025 - 18.05.2025
Berlin Dance Music Event
Berlin, DE

18.05.2025 - 18.05.2025
High End 2025
München, DE

CAMPFIRE AUDIO
Astell&Kern

23.07.2025 - 23.07.2025
Amazon Prime Day
Worldwide

08.09.2025 - 10.09.2025
AES Europe
London, UK



12.09.2025 - 15.09.2025
IBC2025
Amsterdam, NL

26.09.2025 - 28.09.2025
Guitar Summit
Mannheim, DE

GUITAR SUMMIT
STUDIO SOFA

04.10.2025 - 04.10.2025
SynthFest UK
Sheffield, UK

14.10.2025 - 16.10.2025
LEaTcon 25
Studioszene Hamburg Messe, DE

22.10.2025 - 26.10.2025
Amsterdam Dance Event
Amsterdam, NL

Beat 03 | 2025

available Feb 7th, 2024

Feature: Producer Handbook

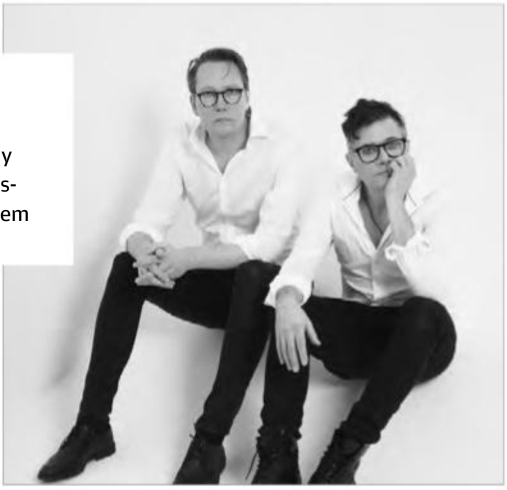
While sidechaining and parallel compression often take the spotlight elsewhere, we reveal the truly crucial secret tricks that make a significant difference in the mix. Get ready for 99 secret recipes, mixing tools, and the most underrated production techniques that will enhance your sound quality, optimize your workflow, and boost your motivation. These techniques are the key to greater creativity and productivity in the studio – a must for every serious producer!

Test: Korg MicroKORG 2

With over 100,000 units sold, the MicroKORG is one of the most successful synthesizers in history and is still in production 20 years after its release. With the MicroKORG 2 Korg wants to build on this success and is retaining the concept: Direct access to well-assorted presets and their sound-relevant parameters, combined with a built-in vocoder plus plug-on microphone in a transport-friendly mini keyboard format. The most important new features are a color display, an extended voice processor and a built-in looper.

Interview: Sjöblom

With their latest album "Dead Of Night", the Swedish two-man project Sjöblom are currently causing a lot of euphoria among fans of 80s-inspired Electro-Pop and Post-Punk. We talk to them about their production secrets.



Test: Behringer Model 15

Even if the name suggests otherwise: It's not a replica of the modular system of the same name, but Behringer took inspiration from the Moog Grandmother. Instead of a Model 15 comes in a Eurorack-compatible desktop housing and the analog spring reverb has been replaced by a digital effect, but otherwise the semi-modular synthesizer offers the same features: two VCO, ladder filter and a small but fine sequencer.

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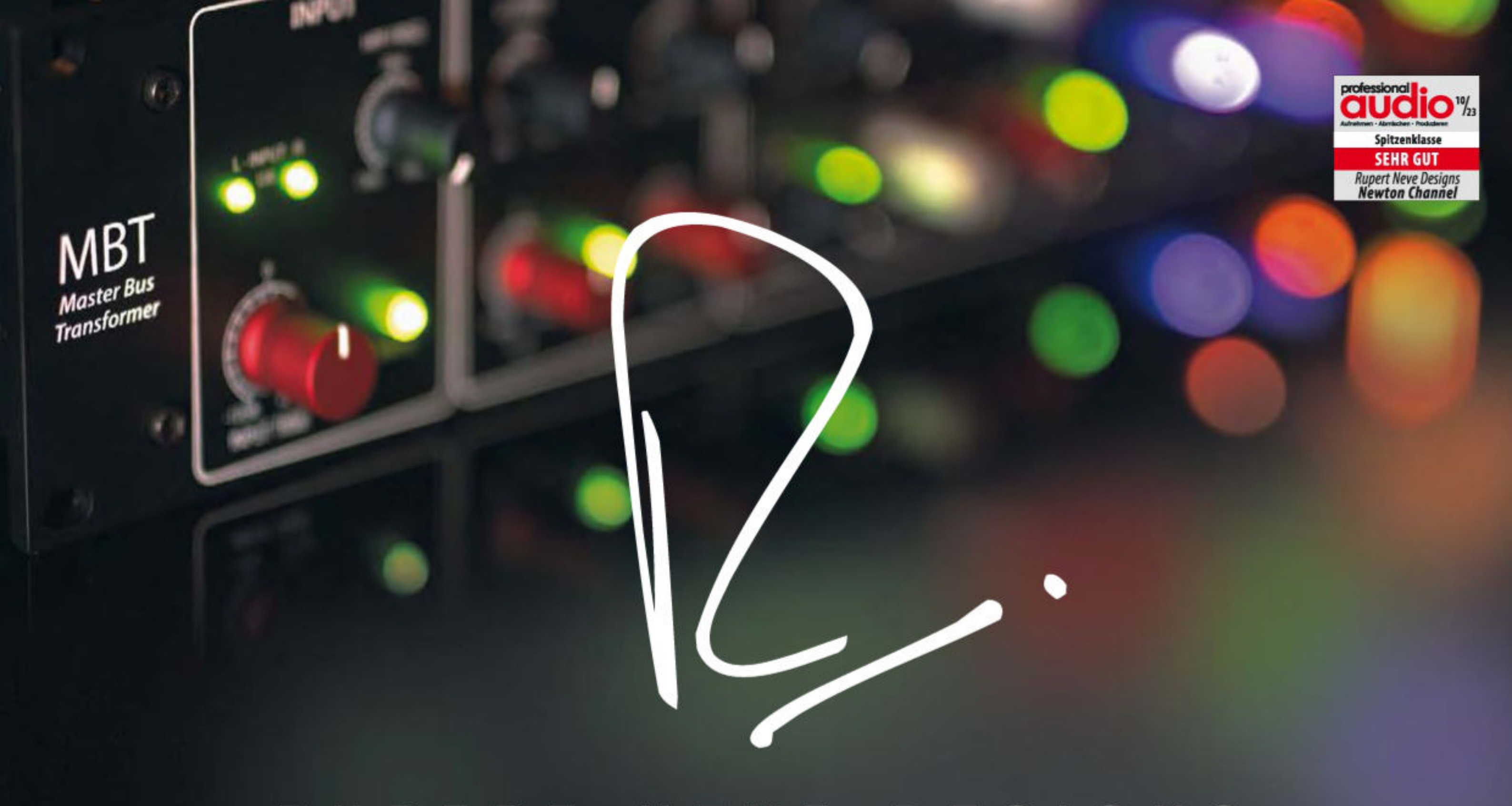
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